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TWICE MARRIED:

A STORY OF

CONNECTICUT LIFE.

By C. W. Phillips

KING. "—— I have sworn an oath.
PRINCESS. Our lady help my lord! He'll be forsworn."
Love's Labor Lost. Act II., Scene 1st.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following romance has appeared in parts in PUTNAM'S MONTHLY, in each number of which, for a great portion of the present year, it has regularly occupied a place. Its very kind reception, not merely by the critical authorities of the press, but by the public at large, has induced the publishers to present it in the present form, in which they confidently trust it will meet with the same generous appreciation as heretofore.

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PREFACE.

It is the custom, now-a-days, for the author of a book to discourse to the reader, in the preface, touching the object and design of the work, and concerning the intent wherewith it was undertaken. Every novel, in this utilitarian age, is written with an earnest purpose of some sort or other. Even fairy stories and tales of genii and giants are contrived, (like sugar-coated pills), in a most cunning fashion, to the end that, while simple and ingenuous youth suppose they are acquiring only a knowledge of the exploits of some Jack the Giant Killer, or Puss in Boots, a subtle moral may be

thereby instilled, at every turn of the leaves, into their unsuspecting minds.

Now, doubtless, I ought to be ashamed to confess it, nevertheless it is the truth, that, in writing this book, the highest impulse of which I was conscious was a very ardent desire to amuse merely the readers of Putnam's Monthly. My story pretends to be nothing more than a plain and homely sketch of rustic Yankee life and character. If the reader discover a moral he is entirely welcome to it. Indeed, he has a perfect and indefeasible right to call it his own; for I assure him, on my honor, that it was not put in by design.

I am vastly gratified at being told that my humble endeavor to please has not been altogether unsuccessful; and I have very willingly accepted the obliging offer of the publishers of the Magazine to confer upon my story the

dignity of covers and binding, and to make a book of it. I sincerely hope their predictions, that the public will regard it with even greater favor in its new form, will be verified.

SUFFIELD, CONN.,
Aug. 10, 1855.

TWICE MARRIED.

CHAPTER I.

In the northeast corner of the hilly county of Windham, in the steady old State of Connecticut, there lies a quiet valley of some three or four miles in length, with a breadth varying from a furlong to a mile. The Niptuck river, of yore a noisy, brawling brook, abounding in rapids and cascades—but which of late has been tamed, and set busily at work, spinning and weaving like a thrifty old-time housewife—no sooner overleaps the last mill-dam that obstructs its course, and hurries swiftly through the narrow gorge in which the northern end of the valley terminates, than it suddenly subsides into quiet, and becomes one of the most peaceful and well behaved streams

in the whole world; thenceforth, flowing smoothly along, over a bed of white sand and pebbles, through level, green meadows, and between low, sloping banks, fringed with drooping willows, with a current so gentle as to be hardly perceptible. For a space, upon the widening surface of the shallow tide, float bubbles and foam-flakes from the rapids above, but as the stream expands, and its current grows more languid, these relics of precedent agitation disappear, and in still, hot midsummer noons, when the faint breezes that fan the hill-tops are unfelt in the valleys between, the Niptuck sleeps in its quiet, shady bed, without a ripple upon its placid bosom, as though it were a-weary with its toils among the water-wheels and mill-dams further up the stream.

The range of hills that form the western limits of the valley presents a bold front of precipitous cliffs, hidden for half the year by the plumy blossoms, and dark green foliage of the chestnut woods, that grow among the ledges; but the acclivity of the eastern hills is a gentle slope of fertile land, divided by

intersecting walls and fences into fields and meadows, and thickly dotted with white farm-houses, orchards, and clumps of walnuts and shade-trees.

A broad highway runs through the valley, near the foot of this slope, which, for nearly its whole extent, is bordered by long rows of umbrageous maples, while here and there, by the road-side, a stately elm towers aloft into the air, sheltering a snug farm-house and its shady, green, front door-yard, beneath its spreading branches.

About midway, on a gentle swell of land, a spur of the eastern hills, round which the loitering river makes a sweeping bend, the trees are more thickly planted, and at a little distance the place resembles a grove of elms and buttonwoods. But glimpses of white dwellings peeping out from among the dense foliage, and a slim spire, surmounted by a gilded ball and vane, rising over all, reveal the spot where the village of Walbury stands, almost hidden among the trees.

Now, although Walbury was settled in the year of our Lord 1671, and has ever since been

inhabited by Yankees—for I dare say that even at this day there are not in the whole town a dozen persons who were born outside the limits of the State of Connecticut—it is, nevertheless, one of the most quiet and least enterprising places in Christendom. The people, instead of partaking of the restless, uneasy disposition, which is the general characteristic of the Yankee race, are for the most part averse to bustle and change, and witness from afar the march of improvement, and the rapid progress of the age, with apprehension and extreme disfavor. The old, square, sharp-gabled meeting-house, in the middle of the broad street, has stood its ground these fourscore years. It has scarcely changed in aspect since the sunny Sabbath afternoon, when the pious congregation then assembled within its walls were amazed by the profane sound of horses' hoofs, clattering in hot haste along the highway, and suddenly halting at the sanctuary door, and the thrilling shout of the dusty courier, that bore from town to town the startling tidings of the battles at Lexington and Concord. The tavern on the corner

of the cross street leading towards the river was a well-known and popular hostelry with the commissary's teamsters in the Revolutionary War. The memory of man runneth not back to the time when the graven image of a chubby Bacchus, seated astride upon a wine-cask, was hoisted into its perch in the main fork of the venerable elm that grows before the door. The sign over the wide, low-browed portal, of the one-story gable-roofed store near by, has served to indicate the place of business of three generations of Deacon Joab Sweenys. Layard himself would find it a most difficult matter to decipher the inscription upon its faded weather-worn surface. The patriarch of the village well remembers being soundly flogged in the humble school-house at the end of the street. There are but few dwellings in the village of less than fifty years of age, and even the barns have an air of antiquity about them that makes them the most venerable of their class. The inhabitants are remarkable for a staid and placid demeanor, and a gravity, and, indeed, even a solemnity of deportment, by which

they are easily distinguished when they venture abroad; and it is not wonderful that even their horses and cattle are more noted for good condition than for speed and activity.

All the customs and manners of the Niptuck valley are of the olden time. Saturday night is there kept sacred as the commencement of the holy Sabbath. Only of Sunday evenings do the Walbury swains venture to go a-courting. Some of the aged men in the village still wear breeches and shoe-buckles. The Sunday coats of the farmers are made of home-spun cloth; and even these they are accustomed in hot weather to take off in meeting, and sit dozing in their shirt-sleeves during the lengthy sermon time. Quiltings and apple-paring bees are the most noted social gatherings, at which the young folks of different sexes meet each other, and in the moonshiny October nights, the old-fashioned husking frolics are as frequent as of yore. Great flocks of sheep are wont to graze upon the hill-side pastures; and numerous descendants of the geese that flourished in a former century are suffered to crop the short grass

growing with the mulleins and may-weed upon the margins of the road, as their ancestors did a hundred years ago, to stalk about the green in single file, with three-pronged yokes upon their necks, or, at other times, to run wildly along the street, with wings outstretched, cackling and screaming shrill warnings of an approaching storm.

Indeed, this secluded little nook, lying in the midst of busy New England, resembles the interior of some ancient church in the heart of a great, bustling, and prosperous city, which, though surrounded on every side by the rush and turmoil of trade and business, and within hearing of the footsteps of the jostling multitudes in the streets, is, nevertheless, pervaded all the week with the spirit of stillness and repose.

On the eastern side of the way, at the upper end of the village street, nearly half a mile from Walbury meeting-house, stands a mansion, of which, as it appeared some thirty-odd years ago, I wish the reader to get a notion. The space between the house and the highway formed a narrow yard, completely canopied

by the spreading branches of a gigantic elm. Between this inclosure and the garden—from which, on either hand, it was fenced by white picket-palings—a short lane or carriage-drive led from the street, up the gentle slope, and so by the southern end of the house to the barn and out-houses in the rear. The house itself was a large, old-fashioned, two-story dwelling, painted white, with a shingled roof, slanting steeply downwards from a high peak, surmounted by a huge turret of a chimney, the birth-place of many generations of swallows. There was a low, one-story wing or L-part at the rear of the main building, fronted by a broad, deep porch, that would have been too sunny except for the vines, that, climbing up the slender posts, overran the roofs, and hung in festoons from the eaves. Here, in the autumn, could be seen, pendent from the posts to which they were fastened at either end, weighty strings of quartered apples, of sweet corn boiled on the cob for winter succotash, and of gaudy red peppers, drying in the sun. Here used to stand a mighty cheese-press, and upon a narrow shelf

outside were wont to be displayed rows of resplendent milk-pans, freshly scalded, shining and glittering like shields of burnished silver.

Across the lane from this porch, just within the limits of the garden, grew a stately pear-tree, sheltering the house from the noon-day glare and heat. It was famous throughout the valley for its great size and productiveness, as well as for the unrivaled excellence of the seven different kinds of fruit which it bore. There was also a row of English cherry-trees bordering the lane, and scores of plum, peach, and apricot trees, in the garden; besides, currant, gooseberry, and raspberry bushes growing peaceably together in a row next to the street fence, thrusting their fruit-laden twigs and branches between the pickets, thereby inciting and tempting little boys, loitering on their way to school, to trespasses and petty larcenies.

Beneath the windows of the house, in the front yard, flourished a little jungle of lilac-bushes, and a bird-rose bush clambered up a trellis and over the architrave of the front doorway, which, in the month of June, was a

perfect wilderness of roses, filling the air all about, out-doors and in-doors, with damask perfumes.

Behind the house was a spacious back-yard, and a deep well in the middle of it, with a crotch and lofty sweep, which resembled, at a distance, the stout, stumpy mast, and long, graceful lateen yard of a Maltese felucca. Upon one side was the wood-shed and chip-yard, and on the other a cider-mill, open at the front, and used for nearly all the year as a tool-house and shelter for carts and wagons. The rearward limit of the space was formed by a great yellow barn, with an arch, and a blank, sombre-looking fanlight, painted in dead, dull black over the great doors, and a long row of pigeon-holes cut through the boards, just beneath the eaves. Between the cider-mill and barn was the mouth of a lane, closed by a gate, and leading out upon the farm, away up the hill-side, to its very summit.

Here dwelt, a good many years ago, a worthy gentleman, who, as his grandfather and father had been before him, was esteemed by the whole neighborhood and township to

be a man of no small mark and consideration. He was the most wealthy inhabitant of the Niptuck valley, a distinction that will of itself account for the high regard in which he was held by his townsmen. From the lowly station of private in the Walbury "flood-woods," he had risen, by regular and successive promotions, to the rank of Colonel of the XXIXth Regiment of Connecticut State Militia.

Moreover, he was in the habit of going to the General Assembly, as one of the representatives of the ancient town of Walbury, as often as he pleased, which was, in fact, pretty nearly every spring. But what he himself chiefly gloried in was, that, for many years in succession, he had been regularly appointed by the legislature, one of the justices of the peace, within and for the county of Windham. Once, even, for a single year, during the trial of an experiment with the judiciary system of the State, he had occupied a seat upon the bench of the Court of Common Pleas, as a *puisne* or "side" judge. Of this appointment he was extremely proud, and it served ever afterwards

as the epoch from which he reckoned the date of every other event.

It so happened, therefore, that besides the usual prefix of "Mister," this gentleman was fairly entitled to either of three several handles to his name. But his neighbors, to his secret disappointment and chagrin, instead of learning, like the rest of the world, to address him by the worshipful title of "Judge," remained steadfast in the long-continued habit of accosting him as "Colonel" and "Squire," and, as will hereinafter more fully appear, when some of the younger and less reverend spoke of him behind his back, they were wont to designate him by still another appellation.

Colonel Starr Manners was a stout, thick-set man, with a round belly, and short, stumpy legs. He wore his coarse, stiff, white hair and bristly whiskers cropped short and close, so that the ruddy soil of his skin was everywhere visible through the hirsute stubble, thereby causing his complexion somewhat to resemble that of a very clean and well-conditioned white shoat. As for his dress, besides a high, white shirt-collar of unusual

volume, there was nothing remarkable about it. Of late he had been accustomed to wear loose and ample garments of fine kerseymere and broadcloth, though, to be sure, when he was at home, and there were no visitors of distinction, he used to wear a coat as seldom as any Turk or Indian chief. He was a shrewd, observing man, and, by means of this quality and habit of mind, had contrived to acquire a fund of practical knowledge, which stood him in very good stead of the bookish wisdom that many of his fellows and associates in public life had been taught by the professors and tutors of Yale College. He had a bluff, hearty manner, was good-humored and benevolent in disposition, yet, withal, extremely self-willed and opinionated, and apt, if flatly opposed, to be violent and overbearing. Nevertheless, like many other obstinate people, he was quite easily managed by those who knew how to humor him. His wife, who was his junior by some fifteen years, a brisk, rosy, handsome little woman, with a sharp, clear, merry gray eye, (it was whispered by the Walbury folks,) could wind him round

and round either one of her plump, white fingers that she chose. Howbeit, the Colonel was generally reputed to have a stiff will of his own, and, in consequence, was quite often spoken of when out of hearing as "Old Fixed Starr," a nickname first invented and applied to him by his own head hired man, a waggish fellow of droll speech and countenance, who never opened his queer-looking mouth but the neighbors made ready to laugh.

The Colonel was a popular and efficient magistrate. Twice a month, or oftener, he was accustomed to hold a justice court in the south front room of his house, and the session of this tribunal used to be indicated by divers signs and tokens, that even the wayfaring man, passing by in the street, if a Yankee, would not have failed to understand. The horses hitched by the road-side, at the gate, or under the shade of the cherry trees in the lane, standing hour after hour, stamping and whisking their tails to drive away the swarms of tormenting flies that disturbed their drowsy meditations; the little squads of men grouped about the door of the court-room at the cor-

ner of the house, or leaning across the fence, talking together in couples, discussing the case on trial, or, perhaps, proposing "swaps" or driving bargains, never ceasing, meanwhile, to whittle diligently; the dogs lounging around the steps at their masters' feet, or romping together in the thick grass of the front door-yard; and the glimpses through the open windows of sweating spectators, sitting in their shirt-sleeves, and listening, with the interest that Anglo-Saxons ever take in judicial proceedings, to the reading of the declaration and pleadings, the testimony of the witnesses, the argument of the lawyers, or the opinions of his worship, the justice, himself.

The equity of the judgments of this court was rarely questioned; for the long experience of the Colonel, as a legislator and magistrate, was a sufficient warranty of his knowledge and ability to administer justice according to law. With the two volumes of Swift's System as lamps to his feet, and the Revised Statutes as a staff in his hand, the Colonel was able to see his way and guide his course among the crooked mazes of the most com-

plicated case. And although there often would arise puzzling interlocutory questions, with respect to such abstruse and technical matters as pleas in abatement, demurrers, and the admissibility of evidence, the Colonel rarely found much difficulty in making up his mind how to decide the final issue. His natural sagacity and shrewd common sense enabled him to perceive upon which side lay the right, notwithstanding the legal mists by which the pettifoggers endeavored to obscure the view; and though it must be confessed that his decisions were not always good law, they seldom failed, nevertheless, to be excellent justice.

There were, to be sure, irreverent people, who, while smarting with the disappointment occasioned by a defeat, would sometimes revive a piece of idle gossip, which was kept current by these very means. It was said that the Colonel, whenever he expected to try a cause of unusual importance, doubt, or complexity, would be sure to leave ajar the door between the south room and the entry, so that his wife, in the sitting-room beyond, could hear the

proceedings as well as himself, and thereby be enabled to give him the benefit of her advice with respect to the merits of the case. But all the ill-mannered jeers, gibes, and grumblings of these discontented fellows, did not, in the least, shake the confidence of the public in the wisdom of the Colonel's legal decisions, for, as everybody knew, Mrs. Manners was a shrewd, clever woman, of more than ordinary wit and learning, and was as well able to give discreet counsel in a difficult matter as e'er a man in Walbury.

But besides these judicial labors—in which the Colonel took great delight—he performed, for nearly all the town, the various ministerial duties that usually appertain to the office of a rural justice of the peace. He draughted and took the acknowledgment of all deeds and other legal instruments; he administered the oath of office to the selectmen, the haywards, the tithing-men, and the other town officers; he presided at meetings of the civil authority for the nomination of taverners, and the selection of fit names to put into the jury-box; and, finally, he joined in the strong but silken

bonds of matrimony more couples, in the course of a year, than even Parson Graves himself.

There is no country in Christendom where it is so easy for any willing pair either to be married or to be divorced (as they may happen to be inclined), without tedious delays and formalities, as in the Puritan State of Connecticut. In some of the counties, it is said, the suits for divorce exceed in number all the other causes upon the dockets of the courts, and, until within a year or two, the Legislature used to be busy for nearly half its session, hearing the plaints of discontented married folks, and cutting them loose from each other by means of special enactments. On the other hand, instead of the three weeks' posting of a written notice, declaratory of an intention to marry, which was formerly required by the laws of the neighboring states—whereby it was rendered necessary to advertise a wedding by placards, like a sheriff's sale—in Connecticut it has always been sufficient, according to the statute in such cases made and provided, to give notice to the world by a single proclama-

tion only, so that it has often happened that a couple have been published at the meeting-house, just before the benediction, at the close of afternoon service, on Sunday, and in ten minutes afterwards have been duly joined in marriage at the parsonage hard by.

It would be natural to suppose that a statute imposing such slight restraints and reasonable delays would be cheerfully obeyed. But, although the Yankees are (as, indeed, they ought to be,) the most orderly and law-abiding people in the world, an opportunity of dextrously evading the spirit and intent of a law, while keeping safely within the letter of its provisions, presents a temptation which a shrewd Yankee finds it difficult to resist.

So, for time immemorial, it has been a custom, observed by many ardent young people living in the border towns of the states adjacent to Connecticut, to be posted in their own parishes for a single Sunday, and then, being thus duly qualified for matrimony, according to the laws of Connecticut, to straightway cross the line, and be married forthwith by some good-natured justice of the peace, or

other proper authority; avoiding by this stratagem the other two weeks of probation and irksome delay, to which they would have been subjected by a strict adherence to the letter of the statute of their own native commonwealth. Now Walbury being not only a border town, but one lying near the very corner of the state, not far distant from the frontiers of both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, in course of time became a sort of Gretna Green, to which people in haste to be married were wont to resort; and Colonel Manrnes, being the most notable justice of the peace of the vicinage, it happened, as a matter of course, that almost every couple that came to Walbury on an urgent matrimonial errand, from across the border, applied to him. So, by means of these circumstances, it came to pass that he married more people than even the minister, and from this source derived a very considerable revenue.

It was sometimes whispered by the village gossips, that the Colonel was not always as particular as he ought to have been in his questions to candidates for matrimony, con-

cerning the evidence and the fact of the previous public notice of their intentions thereto; and Miss Tabitha Graves, the parson's daughter, who was the chief of the village band of elderly young ladies, was accustomed, at meetings of the Dorcas Society and Sewing Circle, to inveigh, with excessive acrimony, against the law by which a mere magistrate and a layman was permitted to officiate in the marriage ceremony. Indeed, though she was a rigid Presbyterian, she was almost inclined to consider this rite as a sacrament of the church, to be administered only by the consecrated clergy.

But as it was very well known and understood that Miss Tabitha held the folly which entices young folks into the state of wedlock in great scorn and contempt, and scarcely ever heard of a wedding without expressing, albeit in a sharp and snappish tone, her pity and commiseration for the fond and foolish bride, people did not regard her animadversions as worthy of serious attention, though if the truth were only known, it was indeed a fact that the Colonel, rather than lose a good fee,

was willing to make a pair of any two single lovers that desired him to couple them; and if the parties appeared to be of a properly mature age, was in nowise disposed to be over nice and punctilious about the matter of the bans.

The Colonel and his wife had but one child, a daughter, upon whom, as it is natural to suppose, her parents bestowed the most tender affection, and for the reason that she was the sole heiress apparent of a large estate, she had been, of course, from her childhood, the subject of a large amount of village gossip. Now this young person is to be the heroine of my story; and I feel no little concern, therefore, at being obliged to confess that which everybody would suspect, even if I should attempt to conceal it. Lucy Manners was a spoiled child, and she grew up to be such a willful, wayward little hussy, that when but a little puss in pantalettes, of no more than thirteen years old, she was mistress of her father's house, and had everything her own way, except when her mother contrived to outmanage her. However, as it almost always happened that Lucy's own way was the pret-

tiest way in the world, I do not think, after all, that it was any great matter to be sorry for.

She was a shrewd body withal, as her mother's child would be apt to be, and having devoured with an insatiable appetite the contents of every novel in the parish, and received instructions in Latin from Parson Graves, the minister, and having been afterwards sent to complete her education at the notable boarding-school of Misses Primber, at Hartford, the gossips were probably not very far from the truth when they affirmed, that she knew a good deal more than any other young woman of her age in Walbury, and almost as much as the Parson himself. Indeed, I dare say that, with respect to some subjects, her knowledge even exceeded that of the worthy divine.

I am of a good mind to say nothing concerning Lucy's person; for, as everybody knows, each author that writes a novel or story is sure to represent the heroine of his tale as the most beautiful creature that ever lived; just as the knights-errant of old used to stroll about the country, asserting everywhere the

preëminent charms of their respective lady-loves, and breaking each other's heads and bones whenever they chanced to meet, and to disagree upon this point, as was almost always sure to happen. I say I am almost of a good mind not to tell whether Lucy Manners was handsome or not, but leave each one to form his own opinion. For it is evident, that, whereas, in the days of chivalry, there could have been but one of all the knights-errant in Christendom whose claims were really veritable, so now there can be but a single author of all the legion of story-writers that affirms the simple truth respecting his heroine. And I fear that it would look like presumption in me—who am young and inexperienced, and a mere tyro—to assert that I alone am entitled to the distinction of writing about the most charming heroine that was ever heard of. But if you had seen this young girl, in the very month of May in which she attained the age of eighteen, just after her return home from the Misses Primber's school, you would not have thought such a pretension upon my part to be extravagant; for I verily believe

that to have made her any handsomer than she was, would have been a needless waste of beauty.

I will not incur the folly of an attempt to describe such a peerless creature; yet as it is quite probable that many will be curious with respect to the style of her beauty, and will be ready to ask whether she was plump or thin, fair or dark complexion, tall or short, and so forth, I will proceed to be more explicit concerning these matters, meanwhile disclaiming all intention of giving a downright description of my heroine, according to the fashion prevalent among authors. And hereby I make manifest the sincerity of my own belief in the superiority of Lucy's good looks. For it would be a very easy thing—after having asserted, in general terms, that she was without a rival—to leave each of my readers to paint her picture for himself, and so each one would be sure to imagine her to be what he most admires. But I disdain to use any such unworthy artifice, in order to gain for my heroine the suffrages of my readers, at the expense of her individuality.

So then I will say that Lucy was in hight about five feet and three or four inches. Her figure was slight and graceful, befitting her youth, though the budding beauties of her form gave promise of ripening, in due season, into the symmetrical proportions of mature and perfect womanhood. She was very fair, with light brown hair that had a pale golden tint in the sun, so thick and wavy, and apt to curl withal, that she used commonly to wear it on her neck and falling over her white shoulders; though of late, to be sure, since she had been at Hartford, it had grown too long to be suffered to have its own way in this fashion. Her face was oval, with a low, broad forehead, and a delicate little chin and rosy mouth, with dimples in each cheek, that chastened the somewhat imperious expression given to her face by her large, calm gray eyes and straight nose. This blending of haughtiness and sweetness was also perceptible in her manner as well as in her face. The queen of gods and men could not assume a mien more superb than this little country girl; the queen of hearts, sweet Venus herself, was not more capable of inspiring love.

I am sure that, by this time, I have made it evident to everybody that my heroine is a very lovely, deserving person, and worthy of the place of honor in brighter pages than mine—a reflection at the same time pleasant and painful. I must confess, however, that I am conscious of feeling a good deal of satisfaction at my good fortune, in having discovered this "gem of purest ray serene," in the sequestered valley of the Niptuck; for I cannot but hope that its luster will be reflected upon the setting in which I shall place it, and so cause my humble story to be regarded with complacency, and perhaps even with delight by those whose good opinion I am so desirous to gain.

That so handsome a creature should have lovers, was a matter of course, and needs not be averred. Even when Lucy was a little witch of ten, and went to the district-school in a short frock and pantalettes, the boys used to strive for the privilege of carrying her dinner basket, and the lucky fellow who secured her for a passenger, to haul home upon a sled, was pretty sure to run a gauntlet of snow-balls

as soon as he had left his lovely fare at her father's gate. Indeed, I have good reason to believe that, before she was ten years of age, she had received a proposal of marriage from her cousin, John Dashleigh—who was but three years older—and that she had returned a favorable reply, accompanied with several kisses, and a great many tears and passionate exclamations; for John was to start the next morning, with his mother and grandfather, in the very tilted wagon in which the children then sat, for the Genesee country, four hundred miles away into the woods, among the bears and savage Indians.

But as the years came and went, John's image, for a while very carefully cherished, grew fainter and fainter in her memory, and in the course of time—she never could tell when or how—it began to be considered a settled thing that when she grew up she was to marry young Joab Sweeny, for whom she could not help feeling a hearty dislike; and, in fact, throughout the neighborhood, it came to be well understood that Fixed Starr and Deacon Joab Sweeny's wife, his sister Achsah, had ne-

gotiated an alliance between Lucy and her cousin, young Joab. To contend against the will of either of these resolute personages was a thing but seldom dreamed of in Walbury. To hope to subvert their joint decree was of course quite out of the question. Besides, when Lucy made her appearance at meeting, the first Sunday after her return home from the Misses Primber's great school at Hartford, she was dressed in such a stylish mode, she carried herself so haughtily, and, above all, she was so transcendently lovely, that the young swains of Walbury, though struck dumb with admiration, instinctively felt that it was madness to aspire to so exalted a fortune as her love would confer. To be sure, the more enterprising of the young fellows, her former school-mates, had, according to the custom of smart young Yankees, left their native village in quest of fortunes abroad. I dare say that if either Jack Ross or Sam Grosvenor had been at home that Sunday night, he would have ventured to have called at the Colonel's for the purpose of inviting Lucy to go to the singing school. Be that as it may, young Joab

Sweeny, as he made ready to do his mother's bidding, and went up into his chamber to repair his Sunday toilet before setting out to call on his fair cousin, confidently supposed that he had no reason to fear a rival. Albeit, in this Joab reckoned without his host, as the saying is, as will hereinafter more fully and at large appear.

CHAPTER II.

The father of Mrs. Manners had been, in his generation, one of the richest farmers in Walbury. Her only brother, John Dashleigh, her senior by several years, did not inherit the thrifty habits of his worthy parent, but grew up to be a handsome, careless, jovial, curly-pated fellow, as averse to hard labor as he was fond of riding about the country on his father's best mare, to cattle shows and turkey-shoots, and of attending all the dances, quiltings, sleigh-rides, and other junkettings that were held within a circuit of thirty miles. His father's sudden and accidental death, the cares consequent upon his accession to the paternal estate, and, above all, the gentle influence of a pretty, newly-wedded wife, sobered and steadied him for a while; but having been unfortunately appointed by the high-sheriff as one of his deputies, he was frequently called away from home to perform the duties of his office, and began to neglect his farm and the toilsome

business of husbandry. Another misfortune befell him, in the flattering guise of an election to the command of a troop of horse in the militia. He was proud of this distinction, and the sums that he expended at training and muster days increased from year to year, until they consumed the greater portion of the shrinking income of his farm. His horses soon outnumbered his kine, and his dogs—the gossipping neighbor-wives said—were sometimes better fed than his children. His debts increased as his means of payment diminished. Creditors began to press him, and he had more writs served upon him than he, as deputy sheriff, served upon other people. From time to time he borrowed of his brother-in-law, until at last, the good Colonel, not then so rich as he afterwards became, was obliged to mortgage his wife's outlands to raise the money to lend him. Finally, one evil day, while away from home at a cattle-show, and half intoxicated, he suffered the time to slip by at which it was his duty (put off till the last moment and then forgotten) to return his writs to a term of court. By this negligence several

plaintiffs, the attaching creditors of an insolvent corporation, lost the security for their claims to which they otherwise would have been entitled. Sheriff Dashleigh was a ruined man. The remnant of his estate but half sufficed to pay the damages recovered against him by the exasperated creditors. His bondsmen, Colonel Manners and Deacon Joab Sweeny, were obliged to pay the heavy balance. The high-sheriff removed his delinquent deputy from office. After that day John Dashleigh never held up his head; and six months afterwards the neighbors bore his broken heart to his grave. Poor Dashleigh had never forgiven himself for the misfortune that he had brought upon his family and his friends. But with all his big heart did Colonel Manners accord a full pardon to the brother of his wife, as he stood by his dying-bed, and pressed his hand and bade him die in peace. The payment of the large sums required to satisfy the claims of the creditors, injured by John Dashleigh's *lâches*, had wrought a woeful diminution of the value of the Colonel's worldly estate; but, for all that, most freely did he give to the widow

the price of his well-beloved span of gray colts, the pride of his heart, when with her children she set out to seek a home, under her father's roof, in the far distant Genesee country to which he had emigrated. But Deacon Joab Sweeny never forgave the man whose default had cost him five thousand dollars. He never forgot the chagrin of that heavy loss, although afterwards, his brother-in-law, the Colonel, repaid him both principal and interest, because, as he said, it had been at his request that the Deacon joined with him in signing the bond.

"Good Lud, sister Axy," said he, rather testily, to the Deacon's wife, who improved this occasion to reproach him for ever having had anything to do with "that shiftless cretur," as she had always called John Dashleigh; "Good Lud, ef I be a fool, as you say, I dunno ez its any o' your business, by gracious! The Deacon's got his pay, haint he? and, as for me, I believe I've got enough left to live on a spell, anyhow, without comin' onto the town, and ef you don't believe it I'm willing to compare with anybody in Walbury. 'Taint alwus

them as pinches a ninepunce till it squeals that gets the most forehanded, mum, and 'twont do you a mite o' hurt to hear so nuther."

Quite variant and somewhat characteristic were the reflections and remarks made by the several parties and witnesses to this last-mentioned transaction, immediately after the departure of Colonel Manners from Deacon Sweeny's house.

"I'm a fool, eh?" muttered the Colonel to himself, as he unhitched his horse from the post at the gate. "Well, maybe I be," he continued, when he got into his wagon, gathered up his reins, and started homewards; "maybe I be; but all money's good for is to use, and ef I haint made a good investment to-night, then I never did—in my judgment. In the first place I've stopped Axy's everlastin' jaw about John Dashleigh; that's worth a thousand dollars at the least kalkilation. I'm able to look the Deacon straight in the eye agin without feelin' as if he was a thinkin' about my askin' him to put his name to that ere bond; and that's worth another thousand. Then I've pleased my wife, and under sich

circumstances I can't call that less than another thousand; and finally I've suited myself and had my own way, and that makes up the balance; and, by gracious!" pursued the Bolonel, laughing outright in the dark all to himself, and whipping his old horse in his glee; "and the best on't is it's all clear gain, for the Deacon 'll save every soomarkee on't for the children, and that's jest what I should ha' done, and all the difference is, he's got the trouble of takin' keer on't, and I haint."

"There, Deacon, what have I alwus told ye?" cried Mrs. Sweeny, turning from the window as her brother drove away, and choosing to forget the prophecies of coming upon the town for the lack of the money, just repaid, to which she had given almost daily utterance for the past five years. "Ah! I don't wonder you don't want to look up. I should think you'd feel like sinkin' right into the airth before me, when you think how often you've blamed me for speakin' my mind to Starr, and sayin' I'd make him mad by tellin' him jest what I thought of his conduct, a-gettin' you into that awful scrape, all for the

sake of that wicked, shiftless cretur, which you see it has come out jest as I alwus knew it would, in my own mind, if I only kep a bearin my witness agin' it. *I* knew, and you might, too, if you'd only had an atom of my sense. I think I've talked to some purpose, hey, haint I? Sixty-five hundred dollars don't grow on every bush, Deacon Sweeny, and ain't to be got nor saved by talking every day, by a good deal. You'd have to talk till your tongue dropped off before you'd save sixty-five hundred dollars by it. I've talked to as good purpose as the lawyers, I guess. Good Land! I wonder what you'd come to if it wan't for me?"

The Deacon, who was so accustomed to the din of his wife's scolding that he scarcely ever gave it any heed, sat meanwhile with his chin upon his breast, silently meditating upon the recent event. "It's raaly a very handsome thing in Starr," thought he, "though after all, 'twan't no mor'n his bounden dooty in conscience, and every one or't to do their dooty without expectin' to be praised for't. I've hoped and prayed that he might be led to

see it, and I've had purty strong faith that my prayers would be answered. I or't to be thankful, and so I am. I'll give—le's see—I'll give twenty dollars towards new shinglin' the meetin-house—that's purty near a third o' one per cent., and actilly that's handsome—and all the rest 'll seem like clear gain. 'Penny saved is a penny airnt,' Poor Richard says. I know jest where I can put the money out and have it tickin' to good advantage. Here was Jim Sparks, only last night, a-wantin' to borry two thousand on his farm, and I couldn't let him have it. Now I can accommodate him, and ef he goes on for three years to come as he has for three years back, the farm 'll be mine, and for half its raal vally; and the balance of the money I know where I can put it out and have it airn me as good as twelve per cent., and as safe, too, as Hartford Bank stock. I declare, it raaly seems as ef I could behold the fingers of Providence in this here, purty plain."

"What a pile of money," thought young Joab, who, before his uncle's visit, had been sitting at the table, solving problems in com-

pound interest from Daboll, in preparation for the morrow's lesson at school. "I wish it was mine, and, by jingo, it will be when 'pa dies, if he ever does;" and then, having estimated the number of years his parent would be likely to survive according to the usual course of nature, he proceeded to apply the rule of compound interest to the case in hand, and experienced a deal of satisfaction in finding how large a sum the money just paid, with interest upon interest, would amount to at the end of twenty years.

"Sixty-five hundred dollars!" thought Sally Blake, the kitchen help, who sat at the chimney corner paring apples for drying. "If I had it, I'd give the most on't to Andrew to buy a farm and stock of cattle, and with the balance I'd get furniture and clothes, and we'd be married next Thanksgiving;" and, absorbed in the pleasing fancies to which these reflections gave rise, poor Sally forgot what she was about, and actually paused in her labor, her hand holding a half-peeled pippin, resting on the tray in her lap, until young Joab called his mother's attention to this circumstance,

whereupon Mrs. Sweeny administered to her help a sharp reproof, and told her she wasn't worth her salt; Joab chuckled and made faces, looking up with a hateful grin at Sally, as he spit on his slate, and rubbed out his sum with his cuff, while Sally herself, roused from a reverie just as she was choosing a name for the first baby, blushed till her pretty face was red as scarlet, and then with a fluttering sigh resumed her task.

But, as Mrs. Sweeny correctly remarked, sixty-five hundred dollars don't grow on every bush, and the shrubs are rare from which but half the sum can be picked; and so it happened that five years elapsed before Andrew Bunn, the Colonel's waggish head-man, and Sally Blake had earned and saved enough to make it prudent for them to marry each other, to buy the Jim Sparks farm, (which, sure enough, the Deacon by that time had for sale), and to set up in the world for themselves. But the five years came and went, leaving crow's feet at the corners of Andrew's eyes, and tracing faint wrinkles on Sally's forehead, and at last the farm was bought, and half paid

for, and the other half secured by a mortgage back, and the joyful Thanksgiving-day arrived, to which, it must be confessed, Sally, subject to the rigorous discipline of Mrs. Sweeny's household rule, had looked forward with greater impatience than even her lover, who, meanwhile, as Colonel Manners' head farm-hand, had been his own master. They had a very nice wedding at Deacon Sweeny's, (for Sally was an orphan whom Mrs. Sweeny had taken to bring up), the expense of which was deducted from the sum due to Sally for wages. It was at this wedding that Lucy—who was at home for Thanksgiving week—conceived a feeling of hearty, active dislike for her cousin Joab, for the reason only that he ventured, upon this occasion, for the first time in his life, to allude to the fact, well understood by both, that they were to marry each other. "I say, Lucy," said he in a whisper, with a sheepish look, "we'll have a weddin' of our own bimeby. I guess by about next Thanksgivin', a year from now, it 'll be you and I." At this Lucy blushed violently, and then turned deadly pale, to the great delight

of her aunt Sweeny, who had, in fact, invented the speech, and had been at great pains in encouraging her son to repeat it, and had watched closely to notice the effect produced thereby. That some time in the future, she was to marry Joab, Lucy had always been told and believed without thinking much about it; but she had always disliked Joab, and this unwonted effort of gallantry on the part of her awkward cousin, at such a time, shocked her like a death-warning, and served to show her very vividly how extremely distasteful to her was the idea of her intended fate.

The next day the newly-married pair took up their abode in a little cottage belonging to the Colonel, which stood over against his own house, on the other side of the way, where they were to reside during the winter, until the time should come for them to enter into possesion of the Jim Sparks farm

To find a proper person to fill the post of manager on his farm, which Andrew Bunn had so long and so worthily occupied, caused Colonel Manners a vast amount of vexation and trouble. The homestead was a very large

farm; besides which there were several outland fields and lots, and though he by no means neglected to superintend his business when at home, and sometimes used even to labor with his own hands at raking hay, mending fence, and jobs of the like sort, the Colonel had long before ceased to head in person his troop of farm-hands, or to exercise over their operations that constant supervision which a good farmer is apt to consider essential to profitable husbandry. This position had long been filled by Andrew, and was soon to become vacant. Several candidates offered themselves, but none were found to suit the Colonel, who was, it must be confessed, somewhat fastidious and hypercritical, although one of the rejected missed obtaining the desirable situation by a hair's breadth only. "How do you contrive about getting bean-poles for the gardin?" asks the Colonel as a final and test question. "Why," replies the man, "afore it comes time to pole the beans, I send the boys to the swamp, and hev 'em cut, and haul home a load with the waggin."

"Very well; very well," cries the Colonel;

"that'll do—good day! A man that don't know how to provide bean-poles for a gardin, ain't the man to oversee my farm."

It was the very morning when the Colonel was again disappointed in the manner just related, that a letter was received from John Dashleigh's widow, who was still living in the Genesee country. Her father was dead, and gone to a better world, she wrote, and having sold out her interest in the estate he left behind him to her brothers, she wished to come and end her days among the scenes of her earlier and happier life, at Walbury, where there was no fever and ague, nor Indians, nor wild beasts, but everything was quiet and orderly, and there was a good school for her little girl, and the stated preaching of the Gospel, and other Christian privileges for herself; but John, her oldest child, now a full-grown man of twenty-one years of age, had expressed a strong desire to emigrate to Ohio, and buy wild land there, and clear a farm, and grow up with the country, as he called it, a project which, it was evident, the widow herself regarded with apprehension

and dislike. Still, she said that she should do, after all, as John thought best; for, though she said it, that shouldn't say it, he was as good a son as there was in the world, and for his age his judgment was excellent, and that she depended on him for advice as much as she ever had on his father; which, without doubt, she did indeed, and more too, for that matter, as Mrs. Manners said aloud in a parenthesis when she read the letter to her husband. And though John was a good scholar, (the widow's letter continued), and amazingly fond of reading and books, there wasn't a better farmer in the whole Genesee country for his age, as all the near neighbors for ten miles round—those who knew him best—had been heard to say time and time again.

"How I should like to see him," quoth Mrs. Manners, wiping her spectacles and folding up the letter when she had finished reading it aloud. "What a comfort he must be to his ma. Jest think on't, husband, of his looking so much like his poor father, only taller. What a handsome young fellow he must be?"

"I don't believe much in that Ohio," remarked the Colonel, shaking his head. "They talk a good deal on't, but it'll never be much of a place. It's too fur off."

"I do hope and pray they wont make up their minds to go there;" added his wife.

"She'd get fever'n-egg and Ingins enough out to Ohio," resumed the Colonel, "and bears and painters too, I tell ye."

"Massy! me!" cried Mrs. Manners, with a little scream; "I wouldn't go for the world. How fur off is it, Colonel?"

"Well; le's see," replied the Colonel, rubbing his head; which, by the by, contained no very clear idea concerning the territory in question. "You see the distance varies accordin' as which way you go—some's nearer and some's furder."

"Say the nighest way," pursued Mrs. Manners.

"Well, I should say mor'n a thousand mild," replied the Colonel, hazarding a guess; which was, like most Yankee guesses, as near the truth as the positive assertions of many other people.

"Goodness, gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Manners, apparently quite aghast. "It's a good ways beyond the Genesee country, then."

"Law," said the Colonel, with a knowing air, "the Genesee country ain't half-way. Why, it's beyond the Alleghany Mountains."

The same night, when this worthy couple had retired to their own room, the lady, for a purpose of her own, contrived to bring up the subject of the Widow Dashleigh's letter, and again, with a shudder, expressed her horror at the notion of her sister-in-law's emigration to such a howling wilderness as Ohio. "She's too fur along in life to think of such a thing," said Mrs. Manners, "and for my part, I should suppose John would rather settle in this part of the country, now his grand'ther's dead, than to go to such a wild place."

"I expect the syle is purty fertile, though," remarked the Colonel.

"No wonder, if they find room to bury all them that dies with the fever'n-egg, and the wild creturs don't dig up the corpses," said his wife.

"I wouldn't want to live there myself,

that's a fact. Ugh!" exclaimed the Colonel, shivering as he jumped into bed.

"Why can't he come and lay out what money they've got in a farm here?" pursued Mrs. Manners. "If he's as good a farmer as Sally says, he'd contrive to pay up in a little while, even if he was obleged to run in debt some. There's Andrew now," she continued, "how long will it be before he'll be clear of the world and forehanded?"

"And speaking of Andrew," she added presently, after a pause, during which she toasted her little feet at the fire, put on her nightcap and slily watched her husband's face, "what on earth, Judge, are you going to do for a man to take his place?"

"I dunno, I'm sure," said the Colonel. Now, whenever Mrs. Manners called her husband "Judge," to his face, it was a pretty sure sign that she wished to make him good-natured if inclined to be a little cross, or to keep him in good humor if already so. Howbeit, the Colonel was not aware of this, though he never failed to take notice whenever he was addressed by this title.

"The first thing you know, it'll be time to go to ploughing," said Mrs. Manners.

"I declare," cried the Colonel, suddenly starting up in bed. "Betsy, I wonder if young John Dashleigh now wouldn't be just the man?"

"Good Land! how you skeert me!" exclaimed Mrs. Manners; "I didn't know but what you was took in a fit or something. What was it you said about John Dashleigh?"

"I wonder if he wouldn't be just the feller to come and take Andrew's place," said the Colonel, lying down again.

"Well, if I ever!" cried the lady, blowing out the light and laughing to herself in the dark. "What a quick witted creetur you be, Judge. Who'd ha' thought o' him now, but you, when he's five hundred miles away, and we hain't seen him for I don't know how many years?"

It would be manifestly improper to relate to the world the conversation of this good couple after they were all nicely tucked up for the night. Let it suffice to say, that the Colonel found no great difficulty in convincing

his wife that the plan he had so ingeniously thought of was a very good one indeed, and successfully overthrew a few feeble objections to it which she started. It was finally agreed, however, at her suggestion, to sleep on the project over night. But the next morning, finding it all the better for having been slept on, the Colonel accordingly dispatched a letter to the Genesee country, proposing to the Widow Dashleigh to come forthwith to Walbury, and take up her abode in the little cottage over the way, as soon as Andrew and his wife should go to their farm, and also offering the post of overseer and manager on the homestead to her son John.

CHAPTER III.

It was a warm and beautiful afternoon in the month of March, that the stage-coach from Albany, which had been delayed by the muddy roads form any hours behind its time, at last arrived and drew up in front of Morgan's Tavern, commonly called the Stage House, in State Street, in the ancient town of Hartford. Among the weary passengers that alighted from it, were the Widow Dashleigh and her two children, on their way from the Genesee country to their old home in the Niptuck Valley. The Providence coach, which used to pass within a few miles of Walbury, had been gone since four o'clock in the morning, and the widow, (who was not very strong), and her little daughter were not sorry for the opportunity afforded them to rest for the remainder of the day and night, before starting upon the last stage of their long and weary journey. So, after a late dinner, the two women went to bed, to regain the sleep

of which they had been cheated by their night stage-ride, while John Dashleigh, whose vigor had been sufficiently restored by a hearty meal, sought his chamber only for the purpose of arranging his disordered and travel-stained dress, and then sallied forth to have a look at the sights of the city.

But except the beautiful ladies—for whom Hartford was as justly famous in those days as it is now—there was nothing in the whole town so well worth the looking at as John Dashleigh himself. For, though it must be confessed that his apparel, in spite of the pains he had just bestowed upon it, still betrayed the marks of wear and travel, as well as its origin in the backwoods, his form was so tall, so well-shaped and so stately, that it needed but slight embellishment by the skill of the tailor. A man who, like John Dashleigh, is more than six feet in height, and well-proportioned withal, need give little thought to the fashion of his raiment. Then John's face—though by no means strictly handsome—was a very pleasant one even for a stranger to see, and there was a noble, manly, and

yet gentle expression in his blue eyes, that —if I were a lady—I should rather my lover would possess than the most polished manners and address, or ever so large an estate. Besides, there was a merry, roguish, good-humored look about his face, that lurked in every feature, and which was heightened by the appearance of his curly brown hair; and as he walked, he carried himself as erect and graceful as any Indian chief. So it is not wonderful that, as he sauntered along the main street, gazing curiously to the right and left at whatsoever chanced to arrest his attention, a great many bright glances were directed towards him, which John erred greatly in suspecting were attracted solely by the odd appearance of his coonskin cap and buckskin leggins and hunting-shirt.

If there had been men, only, to encounter, our hero would have cared little for their gazing; but when groups of ladies, of a beauty quite awful to behold, met him and passed by, rustling in their silken gowns, casting quick, sidelong glances at him from their bright, flashing eyes, and almost always turn-

ing their heads to look after him, he began to be sorely dismayed, though, doubtless, if he had happened to overhear the remarks that many of these fair dames made to each other concerning him, his brown cheeks would have reddened with modesty and pleasurable confusion, instead of diffidence and shame; for John, like every other true man and gallant gentleman, regarded women with the utmost respect and reverence, and set a very high value upon their good opinion and praise.

At last, in a by-street, whither he had fled for refuge from curious eyes, he saw coming towards him a little throng of young women, who were talking and laughing together, until one of them happening to espy him, they suddenly became silent, and each endeavored to assume an air of decorous gravity. John heard them whispering together as they cast forward stealthy looks of observation at him from beneath their downcast eyelids, his ear, sharpened by suspicion, caught the sound of a tittering laugh. He was afraid that the whole bevy of blooming young girls were making sport of his uncouth garb and rude

appearance, and with burinng cheeks he anticipated the moment of meeting them. As they approached still nearer, he raised, with an effort, his bashful eyes, and his unsteady glance rested upon a single face in the centre of the group. At once he forgot his dress, he forgot his rustic looks, he forgot himself; nay, all the world was forgotten except that fair young face; and while the train of demure damsels tripped primly by, in becoming silence, unbroken except by a roguish little cough from a slim young witch with a gipsy hat and mischievous black eyes, he stood, cap in hand, in an attitude so full of unstudied grace, and so expressive of profound and respectful admiration, that there was not one of them all who did not forgive, with all her heart, the scandalous offense of a salute from an utter stranger, notwithstanding the reproving severity of aspect that each one thought it proper to assume.

As for John Dashleigh, he remained standing in the same place, still uncovered, with his eyes fixed upon one form in the retreating group, until it was eclipsed by the corner of

a house at an angle of the street. Then all at once he gave a little start, looked around with the manner of one waking from a dream, put his cap on his head and started, walking rapidly, towards the point at which the young women had vanished from his sight. When he reached the place, however, there was nothing to be seen of them. The street around the corner was full of people, and though he looked in every direction, up and down the street and upon both sides of the way, he failed to discover what he so eagerly sought; and after walking about, looking everywhere as he went, until the sun was set and the shops began to be lighted, he gave up the quest and turned his steps towards the inn.

There are many very good and sensible people, (if I dare hope that such will read my story), who will, I fear, be disposed to disbelieve this portion of it, or else to set down John Dashleigh as a very weak, silly young fellow, because he suffered himself to fall suddenly and violently in love with a girl whom he saw only for an instant, as she was passing him in the street, and of whose name,

rank, and circumstances, he was utterly ignorant. I trust, however, that other persons, of equal good sense and greater experience, will perceive nothing incredible in what I have related. It is not always a matter of option whether one will fall in love or no. The pure and unsophisticated youthful heart is sometimes like the tablet of the chemist, which, when exposed to the presence of a beautiful face, will instantly receive an impression as delicate as the bloom upon the grape, but capable of being rendered as ineffaceable and enduring as graven steel or sculptured marble. And that coarse, rough, obtuse natures are not susceptible to this gentle influence, by no means proves that others are not more impressible. For my part, like Falstaff, I entertain a great respect for instinct, and I firmly believe, not only that there is such a thing as love at first sight, but that such a love, being an instinctive emotion, is a very safe guide to follow in the choice of a husband or wife.

I once read a touching story of a poor fellow, who, in his youth, while walking in the

crowded street of a populous city, saw, for the duration of a single glance, the features of a beautiful lady with whom he at once fell madly in love. He turned to follow her, but she had mingled with the throng of passengers and was lost from his sight. And though day after day he thenceforth haunted the spot where he had met her, until weeks lengthened into months, and months grew to be years, he never saw the lady again. His youth was spent and his manhood's prime wasted in the fruitless quest, yet, when extreme old age had come upon him, he was still accustomed to take his stand each morning, in rain or shine, in cold or heat, upon the long-frequented spot, and carefully attired in the style of fifty years bygone, to peer eagerly at the faces of the young and fair as they passed by him, still seeking among them the original of the picture cherished for so many weary years in his faithful, constant heart; sighing heavily at each new disappointment, and pressing his feeble palms together with a gesture of subdued impatience.

I repeat this story, not because I think John

Dashleigh ever would or could have been guilty of a folly like that of this poor heart-blighted creature. Indeed, as we shall presently see, he turned his back upon Hartford, and went on his way towards Walbury the very next morning after his meeting with the beautiful unknown young lady, without having, in the mean time, seen her again, or obtained the least clue by which he might trace out her identity. But my purpose is to show, by a well authenticated instance, that an enduring love, evidenced by unequaled devotion and fidelity, may be kindled by a single glance.

I am not able to tell, (I must confess,) with any more certainty than the most sensible and matter-of-fact person in the world, what would have been the effect upon John Dashleigh's future life, if he had never beheld the beautiful unknown again. I think, however, that he himself came very near the truth, as he sat upon the coach-box, with the driver, the next morning, thinking soberly of this very matter, and at the same time looking back towards the steeples of Hartford, piercing through the mist that had risen from the

river, and catching on their sharp pinnacles the first ruddy gleams of the early dawn. "The chances are," said John to himself, "that I shall never see her again;" and with this he felt a twinge of the heart-ache, which it required all his fortitude to endure and to conceal; "and even if I should," he continued, still to himself, "a beautiful, delicate creature like this, some very rich man's daughter, probably, would be so far above me, that I could never hope to win her. I know that I could love her as I can never love any one else, but I must not let myself love, though I never can forget her. We shall never be to each other more than two fellow-mortals, living separate and apart in the world, and unknown to each other. But she is the very one of whom I've dreamed sometimes. Indeed, it seems as if I must have seen her before; but that can't be. I know I never have, and yet there's a look about her, that she gave me for a single instant, which seemed as familiar as my mother's smile. And how handsome she was! how perfectly lovely! If I could have all the women in the world to

choose a wife from, I know, though I've had but one look at her, that she's the one I'd pick out. But it never can be. It's a great misfortune to me too; for though I may be happy without her—working for mother and Ellen and trying to make them happy—yet I'm sure I can never be so completely, perfectly happy as I might have been, if fate had ordered it otherwise. However, it's a man's duty to bear the misfortunes that fall to his lot, and it would be folly to fret and repine at this, when it isn't going to change anything or do the least good."

Having come to this wise conclusion, our hero gave a fluttering, sobbing sigh of intense regret, that seemed to come from the very bottom of his heart, and which he was fain to disguise by a shiver, as if he were a-cold; and then, buttoning his coarse blanket overcoat closely to his throat, he rubbed his hands, settled himself in his seat, and tried to look forward at the road, and at the future before him, with a cheerful face and spirit. Nevertheless, there was perceptible to his mental vision a rose-tint in the dull, gray canopy of

mist that overhung the distant city, that he failed to discern among the resplendent hues of dawn with which the eastern sky was all aglow.

I heartily despise all claptrap, especially of that sort which can be easily detected and seen through, and the reader will bear me witness that the purpose for which the narrative set forth in the present chapter has been related, was formally and frankly avowed at the very beginning. I hope, therefore, that I shall not be unjustly suspected of a shallow attempt to surprise the reader by what is to appear in the conclusion.

Some six weeks had elapsed since the arrival of the widow Dashleigh and her children at Walbury. In the mean time, Andrew and his rejoicing helpmeet had entered and possessed themselves of that promised land from which the unfortunate Canaanite, Jim Sparks, had been ejected, and the widow had been established in the little cottage over the way. John had sustained, in a most satisfactory manner, an examination touching his qualifications as a farmer, and had been duly installed

into office as the headman and overseer upon the farm. His method of providing bean-poles for the kitchen garden—by saving suitable sticks for that purpose from the woodpile, and laying them by, from time to time, as they came to hand during the course of chopping the supply of fuel for the summer's fire—was found to be in accordance with the Colonel's own thrifty custom. The stained snow-banks remaining on the shady side of stone walls and fences, had dwindled day by day in the sun, and had finally vanished from the sight. The Niptuck had celebrated its emancipation from the stern and icy bonds of winter, by a saturnalian freshet, and then returned quietly to its accustomed channel. Where the shallow pools, left in the hollows by the retiring flood, had shrunk and dried away, the springing herbage had grown more rapidly than elsewhere; though over all the surface of the intervale meadows, the grass had spread its mantle of brilliant green, spangled with dandelions and early wild flowers. The drooping willows on the river banks had put forth, first of all the trees, their slender, sil-

very leaves, and strewn the ground beneath them with down as light as gossamer. The alders and osiers had hung out their tasseled catkins, and the birchen woods, first attiring their white limbs in the rusty-looking suits of ruddy swelling buds with which they are wont to be clothed in the early spring, had suddenly changed them for a more comely apparel, composed of tender, glossy green leaves, that, for ever quivering, even in the faintest breeze, reveal their delicate silver linings to the sun. In the moist lowlands, and by the brooksides, the woolly-headed polly-pods had feathered out into fragrant brakes, and the bright-eyed blossoms of the cowslip shone out like stars from among its dark green leaves. The frogs, awakened from their long winter's slumber, had at first tried their voices each for himself, croaking hoarsely, and startling the lonely traveler at night, with strange, uncouth, guttural noises, and fearful mutterings; but now they had learned once more to sing in chorus, and filled the misty evening air with shrill and piercing cries, that smote upon the ear like the confused jangling of

millions of sharp-toned sleigh-bells. The white blossoms of the swamp-willow had given the welcome token of the approach and advent of that mighty host of fat and luscious shad, which annually invades the coasts and rivers of Connecticut, and leave the bones of myriads of their number upon the trenchers of the people of the land. The fattening calves were left the sole tenants of the deserted stables, while their mammas, the kine, went forth once more to revisit their summer pastures in the huckleberry swamps and on the hill-sides, and their uncles, the patient oxen, with lolling tongues, toiled in the fields hard by. The hollow spaces of the empty barns resounded all the mornings with clamorous cacklings of triumphant pullets, and in snug corners of the mangers, and sly nooks and burrowings in the shrunken hay-mow, the setting hens brooded upon their hoards of eggs, and winked and dozed in quiet through the period of incubation, secure from all disturbance. The governor and council and the representatives of the people of Connecticut, in general

court assembled, had convened at Hartford for the purpose of devouring dragon oysters and fresh shad, and enacting laws for the public weal. Colonel Manners, having signified his will to continue in the service of the State, to his fellows of the little clique of village magnates that controlled the political affairs of the town, and having been, of course, elected, as usual, one of the members for the ancient town of Walbury, had gone up with his wife, in a one-horse chaise, to the capital, from whence, at the end of the election week, Mrs. Manners intended to return home, bringing with her Lucy, her daughter; that young lady having finished her education at the Misses Primber's seminary, and drank to the very dregs of that celebrated fountain of useful knowledge. In a word, it was a warm, bright, sunshiny day near the middle of the delightful month of May, and John Dashleigh and his mother, who had been left joint regents of the Manners' homestead, were awaiting the return of the mistress and heiress apparent of the little realm.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when John—who was at work pruning in the top of the great pear-tree which stood by the garden gate, across the lane from the south porch—saw in the distance the hood-top of a carriage, which was coming up to the further side of the little hill in the Hartford road. Presently a horse's head bobbed up in the middle of the path, and at length both horse and carriage came into full view, upon the summit of the acclivity, and proved to be Old Bob and the expected chaise. The vehicle contained two ladies, as John could plainly see. So, according to previous arrangement, he called to his mother, who sat knitting in the porch, to tell her that the chaise was in sight and to put the tea-kettle over, and then prepared to descend from his perch. But while he was putting his tools into the basket, and lowering it to the ground by means of a cord attached to its handle, the chaise had reached the mouth of the lane. As Old Bob came trotting briskly up the drive towards the house, John glanced downwards with eager curiosity to catch a

sight of his old play-fellow and cousin Lucy, and came within an ace of tumbling headlong after his tool-basket, when he beheld, seated by the side of his aunt Betsy, the charming young girl whom he had seen in the street at Hartford!

CHAPTER IV.

The chaise stopped at the stepping-stones of the south porch, and in a twinkling, Lucy Manners, (for she it was that sat with Mrs. Manners,) jumped out with one bound, not minding the steps at all, and, running up to the widow Dashleigh, who stood in the porch, with little Ellen standing bashfully almost behind her, she embraced them both with great ardor, kissing them two or three times apiece, and crying out that she knew they were her dear aunt Polly, and her darling little cousin Nelly, and then she stooped and hugged Boatswain, the big watch-dog, about his neck, and, I believe, kissed him too. After that she stamped her pretty feet several times, and shook the dust from her skirts, holding them out wide-spread in front, and slightly stooping, looked first at the toe of one of her slim gaiter boots, and then at the other, as she raised them alternately displaying no inconsiderable portion of her taper ankles; and finally, this position being, I sup-

pose, suggestive of dancing, she took two or three steps on the porch floor, and declared, to the air of the Soldier's Joy, that she was never so happy before in all the days of her life, and that, during the remainder of her existence upon this planet, she intended to do just as she pleased, and never to look in any book whatsoever, unless it should be a romance or book of poems; and in conclusion she appealed to the dog to say whether he would not himself be of like mind under similar circumstances; whereto Bose straightway replied with three short, emphatic, affirmative barks, and signified his hearty approval of his young mistress' opinions by thumping applause on the door-step with his tail.

Meanwhile John, recovering from a stupor of astonishment and delight, had been peeping, through the lofty covert of leaves and blossoms in which he was hidden, at Lucy's graceful frolics and vivacious extravagances. He did not fail to mark the elegance of her figure, and took especial note of the tapering symmetry of her ankles. The tones of her voice, singing, laughing, and talking, all in a breath, seemed to his enraptured ears far sweeter music than

the melodious thrills and quavers of a bob-a-link, warbling in the meadow hard by; and her face —— if it had appeared lovely when he had seen it six weeks before in Hartford, with every feature striving to assume as prim and demure an expression as might be, now that it was all aglow with delight, pleasure, and excitement, it was so bewilderingly beautiful that it fairly dazzled him! Heavens! what a change had come to pass within the last few minutes. It was less than an hour since, in spite of himself, he had been thinking pensively of the beautiful unknown, wondering who and where she might be, and what she might then happen to be doing or saying, and then, rousing from a reverie, murmuring to himself that he must forget her, and there was no use in being a fool; that she was far above him, moving in a higher and distant sphere, and that he should never see her again in the world; but that, of course, some time she would marry some rich and splendid nobleman; at which last-mentioned fancy, his heart, in spite of himself, would seem to die within him, poor fellow, and a great lump would rise in his

throat that couldn't well be swallowed again without tears to moisten it—and now—why! here she was, his own cousin, Lucy Manners, with whom, when they were both little children, he had played a thousand times; who had written home from Hartford that she remembered cousin John Dashleigh, and about his going away, and had sent him her love and a kiss for the sake of old times! His heart leaped to his throat, as after five minutes' effort he fairly comprehended the truth and its extent, and possible consequences. What a pleasant world it was! he thought. How bright seemed the future that but just now had appeared so dreary! Though the limb of the pear-tree on which John sat was less than a score of feet above the earth, he seemed to be more than half way to heaven! Now, the reason was apparent why it was that he had been so suddenly and irresistibly attracted by the sweet face of his cousin, and why her image had seemed so strangely familiar to him, that he had been used to wonder whether it were not true, that, in some previous state of existence, the soul of the beautiful stranger and

his own spirit had known and dearly loved each other.

"But where on earth's John!" at length asked Mrs. Manners, looking about her. "I expected he'd be the first one to meet us, and somebody ought to untackle Old Bob, and turn him into the pastur."

"To be sure," cried Lucy, who had been kissing Susan Peet, the kitchen help, a former class-mate of hers at the district school. "Sure enough, where is cousin John? I long to kiss him!"

Gracious Goodness! How John, in the top of the pear-tree, blushed, till the white blossoms nearest to his face turned rosy red in the reflection.

"Why!" said the widow, "I wonder where he's gone to! He knows you're come, for he was in the garden just now, and hallooed to me that you had come in sight."

"In the garden? Let's go and find him," cried Lucy, putting her arm round Ellen's waist.

As the two girls came running across the lane towards the garden gate, John once more

prepared to descend, but in so doing he did not have the luck of Zaccheus of old; for, placing his hand upon a branch of the tree, by which to swing himself down, he happened to clasp, not only the branch itself, but also a blossom containing a wasp. The insect, feeling the fatal pressure had time, before it was crushed to death, to dart its venomous sting; at which John, with an involuntary cry of pain, unloosened his grasp, and the slight twig by which he held with his other hand not being able to bear his weight, down he came through the cracking branches, plump upon the greensward at Lucy's feet, just as she opened the garden wicket! Lucy screamed, as well she might, for it's a somewhat startling thing for a young maiden to behold a strange man, of twelve stone weight, drop into her path from the clouds. Ellen, though sorely scared, hastened to assist her prostrate brother, as soon as ever he came to the ground, while Boatswain, who evidently jumped at once to the conclusion that John Dashleigh was some wild beast, like a panther —to his shame be it spoken—put his tail between his legs, yelped, and fled amain. The

three women in the porch uttered loud exclamations of alarm, and Old Bob, frightened out of his wonted propriety, by the loud snapping and rustling of the breaking boughs and the uproar that followed, started and ran into the back yard, where, after a circuit about the well, he finally brought up against the leach-hogshead and overset the chaise upon the wood-pile. And all these terrors and mishaps were caused by the tiny sting of an insignificant little wasp, not half so large as the point of the finest cambric needle, just as it often happens that the slim and supple tongue of some gossiping old maid will set a neighborhood by the ears, and create commotions, heart-burnings, and disturbances, throughout a whole village.

John, though a little shaken by his fall, was not otherwise injured, and, indeed, was far more alarmed at the terror depicted in Lucy's pale face than he had been at the accident which caused it. He feared that she was going to faint, and bounding up from the ground, and putting Ellen aside hastily, he ran to his cousin as she was tottering towards the fence, clasped

her round the waist, and cried out lustily for somebody to bring water.

"Why—who—who are you?" cried Lucy, struggling a little. "It's John, Lucy," said Ellen. "He won't hurt you." "Oh-ho!" cried Lucy, as naturally as could be, which John took to be an expression of pain or faintness. "Get some water, Ellen," said he. "No, no; cousin John," cried Lucy, shaking her curls, "I don't need any water—and—and—let me go, sir—or—why don't you kiss me, cousin John?"

It was no mere cousinly kiss that John, not having time to grow bashful, at once pressed upon Lucy's saucy lips; and though she had never been kissed in that fervent manner before, she felt instinctively that it was the passion of a lover which made that first kiss such a long, ardent, clinging caress. She struggled feebly, and though she had been pale a minute before, she was rosy enough I warrant you, when, as John released her, she looked into his glittering eyes, and recognised the handsome face of the tall young backwoodsman that she had seen in the street at Hartford,

whom the other girls had thought so good-looking, and talked about so much, calling him by various names and titles, as "Robin Hood," and "The Handsome Forester," and who—she had guessed at the time—had been so smitten by her beauty.

I don't know but that John would have kept on kissing his pretty cousin until this time, if it had not been for the remonstrances of Ellen, who protested, with great vivacity, against the prolonged duration of the salute. As for Lucy herself, I must confess that she did not offer a word by way of rebuke or expostulation, for the reason—as she afterwards privately explained to Ellen and Susan—that she could not get breath to do so: the which still further illustrates the length and vehemence of John Dashleigh's kiss. But just as he came to his senses again, his mother, Mrs. Manners, and Susan arrived, all together, at the garden gate, bringing, the one a camphor bottle, another a vial of hartshorn, and the third a basin of water. The three were accompanied by Boatswain, who had perceived from afar John's assault upon the person of Lucy, and who immediately laid

hold of the hinder portion of the offender's pantaloons, and tugged away with great apparent fierceness, no doubt hoping thereby to retrieve his reputation for fidelity and courage, which had, to be sure, suffered greatly by his recent sudden retreat.

"Who's hurt?" cried Mrs. Manners, looking about her.

"Get out, Bose!" said Susan, observing John's inattention to the attack in his rear. "Law! kick him, John! he'll tear your trowses all to rags!"

Poor widow Dashleigh glanced at the flushed faces of her son and niece, and felt ready to sink into the ground; fearing that John might have offended the heiress by the strange rudeness of which she had witnessed a part. "For shame, John!" said she; "you musn't think young ladies in New England like to be kissed and touzled about like the backwoods girls at a huskin'!"

"Pooh! pooh! Polly;" cried Mrs. Manners, corking up the camphor bottle again, and smiling with a shrewd expression; "girls are very much the same wherever you find 'em. Besides, John

and Lucy are cousins, and hain't seen each other since they were children."

"That's true," said the widow, much relieved.

"Kiss her again, John!" said Mrs. Manners.

"Thank you, no:" cried Lucy, stepping back.

"Come, sister Polly," said Mrs. Manners, with the same shrewd smile. "There's been more scare than harm done, I guess. Let's leave 'em to make up, and do you, John, as soon as you can, come and look after old Bob and the shay."

"Massy sakes!" cried Susan, when the two elder ladies had departed. "I expected to find somebody e'enamost dead."

"Humph! I *am* nearly smothered!" said Lucy, pouting, and arranging her disordered collar and bonnet. "You must have learned to kiss from the bears and Indians in the Genesee country, cousin John. Indeed, sir, I never saw such a rude fellow."

At this speech, and the look of feigned displeasure which accompanied it, John, who,

whatever he might have been taught in the Genesee country with respect to the manner of kissing, had had but few opportunities to learn there all the ways of women; John, I say, was so extremely disconcerted, and discomfited, and experienced such shame and distress, that his countenance, which was always a truthful index of his thoughts, betrayed plainly the anguish of his soul; so that Lucy could not help feeling a violent pity for him.

"Well, well, cousin John," said she, in the kindest tone, and smiling as she extended her hand; "there's no harm done, after all, unless you've broken your neck tumbling out of the pear-tree."

John humbly took the little white hand that was held out to him, and shook it awkwardly but did not dare to kiss it, as Lucy supposed he would. Indeed, it didn't come into his head to do so, for he had been taught, with respect to the matter of kissing, to proceed at once to the cheeks and lips, according to the rude fashion prevailing at that time in the Genesee country. However, Lucy, the little

witch, knew as well as that she was a beauty, that her tall, well-favored cousin was her lover and, as big as he was, the slave of her merest whim and caprice. Even gentle little Ellen, standing by, wonderingly guessed the truth, and blushed at her thoughts; while Susan Peet, whose suspicions, new-born as they were, had suddenly matured into firm convictions, smiled, mischievously; though, at the same time, she smothered a faint pang of regret at the destruction of a vague hope, which, till then, she had not discovered was alive in her heart. "I ain't wanted no more," said she, rather plaintively; "so I'll go, I believe. But, John," she added, as she opened the garden gate, "you'd better come pretty soon, for Old Bob's tipped the shay over onto the wood-pile, and upsot it, and Miss Manners and Miss Dashleigh are tryin' to onhitch him."

At hearing of this disaster, John hastily inquired of his cousin whether she felt strong enough to walk to the house with Ellen's assistance; and upon being assured by Lucy of her ability to walk without any aid whatever, he repaired to the back-yard, where he found his

mother, Mrs. Manners, and Susan, endeavoring to extricate Old Bob from the shafts of the unfortunate chaise, which lay on its beam ends upon the wood-pile. The performance of this task he forthwith took upon himself, and the women retired into the house. Having unharnessed the horse and turned him into the lane to roll, righted the chaise and run it under the shed, he unstrapped Lucy's trunk and carried it into the hall; though, by this time, his hand began to smart and swell. However, when he saw Lucy's face in a halo of bright curls, as she stooped over the banisters of the staircase, and heard her thank him for a dear, good, cousin John, and ask if he wouldn't please bring the trunk up into her room, he forgot all about the pain, and rejecting Susan's proffers of assistance, he mounted the stairs with his burden, which he would have set down at the door of Lucy's room; for he was too modest to enter that sacred apartment without further invitation; but Lucy came and held open the door, smiling so pleasantly all the while, and so he passed in by her, and finally, at her direction, placed the trunk at the foot of the

little white bed. Then he took off his hat and went out, on tiptoe, without saying a word, for there was an atmosphere of purity and innocence in the place that it seemed to him would be disturbed by the sound of his voice. When he got down into the kitchen again, Susan bathed his hands in hartshorn, and told him to hurry and get ready for tea. So he went over to his mother's house across the way, washed his face and hands, combed his hair, and put on his coat, and then returned to the big house, where, as soon as he made his appearance, everybody sat down to the tea-table, and fell a-talking of old times, and how he and Lucy and Ellen had grown.

During this time his thoughts were in such a state of confusion that it would be difficult to give any account of them, except that, it is safe to say, his cousin Lucy was never once out of his mind. And when he found himself sitting at the table right opposite to her, I verily believe that, if the liquid in his cup had been a strong decoction of mayweed and thoroughwort, sweetened with molasses, instead of being, as in fact it was, an infusion of fragrant young

hyson, mingled with rich cream and with a lump of loaf sugar dissolved in it, John would never have perceived the difference; albeit, herb-drink, from his boyhood, had been a beverage most distasteful to his palate.

"Cecil, a coxcomb," I think it was who was cured of his fancy for a handsome German lady, by beholding her devour sour-krout, carrying the morsels to her pretty lips with a steel knife-blade blackened with vinegar. And there are many over-nice gentlemen whom I have heard to aver, that to see a lady eat, has at all times a potent disenchanting influence. It dissolves the charm, they say, to be obliged thus to take actual notice that these delicate creatures, as Othello calls them, have their appetites, and live by consuming bread and meat, and by the excercise of physical functions common to man and other lower animals. But, I warrant you, if any of these squeamish gentlemen had seen Lucy Manners at the tea-table that afternoon, though she ate with a traveler's appetite, he would have longed, as John in fact did, to be transformed into a biscuit, a doughnut, a slice of loaf-cake, or

even a pickled cucumber, so that he might have stood a chance of touching her rosy lips, and of being pressed by the little pearly teeth that showed themselves between them. Be that as it may, I can say of John Dashleigh, that his admiration, instead of being diminished, was sensibly augmented and hightened by witnessing the spectacle before him, and his love waxed more violent during each moment of the repast.

When it suddenly occurred to him that the tea-cup, which for the occasion was appropriated to his particular use, had, doubtless, before that time, been hallowed by the contact of Lucy's lips, he carefully drank from each segment of the rim, so that no portion of the consecrated surface should escape his touch. Inspired by a similar idea, he bestowed numberless kisses upon the bowl of his teaspoon, and the tines of his unconscious fork. Thus he drank in love, as it were, with each draught of tea, and, whereas, by reason of the expedients which I have mentioned, he neglected the solids of the meal, but imbibed a most unusual quantity, it will be readily believed

that when at last he rose from the table, with the perspiration starting from every pore in his face, he was, like Solomon of old, full of love.

After tea, the laborers came in from the fields to their supper, and the boys drove the cows in from pasture. John took his pail and went out to the barn-yard, but no sooner had he seated himself on a three-legged stool beside a stately red cow, and the streams of milk had begun to patter upon the bottom of the pail, than Lucy and Ellen appeared at the gate, and came tripping towards him, holding their frocks so high that John, who, though one of the most modest young men in the world—as I have said before—was, after all, no hermit, could not help again observing the fashion of Lucy's dainty ankles.

The red cow pricked up her ears, stopped chewing her cud, and gazed steadfastly at the unwonted visitors.

"So, so, boss!" said John soothingly. "Stand still, now."

"Oh! oh! that's Cherry!" cried Lucy; Cherry, my own heifer, that I taught to drink

out of a pail when she was a little speck of a calf! I've helped to milk her many a time. Let me try now, cousin John, to see whether I've forgotten how!"

"I wouldn't, Lucy, you'll spoil your nice dress;" remarked prudent little Ellen.

"And soil your hands," added John, looking at Lucy's white taper fingers, sparkling, like every school girl's just returned home, with many keepsake rings; and as Cherry herself remonstrated with an angry toss of the head and a start forward that came near upsetting the milk-pail, Lucy was forced to relinquish the attempt. So she contented herself with looking on, standing with Ellen as near to John as Cherry would permit, and talking with him while he continued his task.

"Cherry is like all the rest of the world," said Lucy, pouting in the most bewitching manner. She forgets her friends after a little time of absence."

"They've only just taken away her calf," said Ellen, "and it makes her cross, poor thing."

"She is usually very gentle," added John.

"She is my own heifer," said Lucy. "She was born on my birth-day, six years ago, and papa gave her to me for my own."

Ellen thought this circumstance a most wonderful matter, and John was conscious of an increased esteem for his favorite cow.

"When I am married, papa says I am to have Cherry as a part of my setting out," said Lucy; at which remark John's hand trembled so that he milked all over his knees.

"Maybe Cherry will be a very old cow by that time," said Ellen.

"Oh, no! I fear not," replied Lucy with a rueful laugh, (if one may say so). "Dear me! Don't you think papa told me the other day, that I am to be married next Thanksgiving day!"

"To Joab Sweeny, I suppose?" said Ellen, while John held his breath and tightened his gripe on Cherry's teats.

"Yes, to cousin Joab," replied Lucy, with a shrug and grimace. "It's been a settled thing, you know, for ever so many years; and papa is set upon it. But, just to think of it—to marry my cousin! It's just as if I should marry you, John!"

John thought he could perceive a distinction, not without a difference, between the two cases; but held his peace and kept on milking.

"I wouldn't marry Joab Sweeny for a thousand dollars," remarked Ellen; "no, not for the whole world!" she added in a positive tone, after a pause.

"Hush! Nelly!" murmured poor John.

"And I am sure," cried Lucy, passionately, as she remembered, with a shudder, the odious, leering simper with which Joab had uttered his gallant speech, on the occasion of Andrew's wedding; "and I am sure I wouldn't if I could hlep myself. God knows I don't wish to marry him, for I hate him as I do a snake. And mamma, too—I truly believe she would be glad if the match could be broken off without making papa outrageous. She never liked Aunt Axy, nor Joab either; and what papa sees to like in him is more than I can tell. Cousin John! I'll take back what I said. Marrying Joab would not be like marrying you. I'd rather have you a thousand times!" she added, impetuously, at which John looked up from his pail for an instant, and Lucy's flash-

ing eyes fell as they met his glance, and the glow of excitement on her cheek deepened into a crimson blush.

At this moment, Susan appeared at the gate, and delivered a message from the matrons in the house, admonishing the young ladies of the lateness of the hour, and that the dew was beginning to fall. So Lucy bade John good-night, and gave Cherry a timid pat on the side, which the ungrateful brute resented with a whisk of her tail that knocked John's hat over his eyes, and effectually prevented his watching Lucy's retreat as she ran laughing towards the gate.

The most trivial circumstance sometimes has a momentous influence upon the destinies of men and of nations. I cannot stop here to cite instances of this truth; and, indeed, it would be needless, for everybody knows that it is so. Now, if it had not been for the untying of the knot of Susan's garter, I verily believe that Lucy Manners would have been to-day Mrs. Deacon Joab Sweeny the III. For, as Susan was crossing the yard, while on her way to do the errand wherewith she was

charged, she suddenly felt her garter slip. So, first having glanced quickly about in every direction, lest some of the men might be within eye-shot, she stooped, and modestly lifting her skirts, tightened the piece of listing that encircled her plump and shapely limb, and went upon her way. But the brief delay caused by this lucky accident gave Lucy time to reply to Ellen, as is hereinbefore set forth. If that reply had never been uttered, or if Lucy and John had not exchanged glances in the way I have just described—but I must not anticipate. I fear I shall never learn to tell a story according to the rules of the art.

When, that night, John went up into his little chamber in the attic of the widow's gable-roofed cottage, there was not, I am very sure, in any one of the United States of America, a young man more thoroughly in love than he. Though he was a plain, unsophisticated young farmer, bred in the wilds of the Genesee country, and unaccustomed to read novels and romances, or the poetry of my Lord Byron, I dare take it upon myself to say that, throughout the length and breadth of the Republic,

there was not a dry-goods clerk or eke a college student more intensely or heartily in love. Instead, therefore, of going straight to bed, as was his habit at this busy season of the year, or, as was sometimes his wont—when not too weary with the toils of the day—sitting down by the side of his table to read awhile until he grew sleepy, he at once blew out his light, drew the curtain of his narrow, eight-paned, dormer window, and seated himself beside it, on the foot of his humble bed. For awhile, the tumult of his thoughts was too violent to permit reflection. The blissful consciousness of being so entirely in love filled his soul completely. The accustomed sway of reason was suspended. Once only in a lifetime does the lover experience the delicious emotions with which John Dashleigh was overwhelmed. After the first passionate ecstasy of new-born love, come doubts, and fears, and jealousies. The luster of the new life becomes dimmed like the brightness of metal. Once only in a man's life, then, is he completely happy, happy without alloy, when, forgetting the fear of misfortune, pain and disease, and the ever-

present dread of death, he remembers only that the world contains the beloved one, and so is better and brighter than even the abodes of the angels.

John's nerves had not yet ceased to thrill with the rapture of Lucy's kiss, and once he was at the pains even to relight his candle, and go to the little looking-glass that hung against the chimney, where he gazed for the space of five minutes at the reflection of his own lips, which, that day, had met those of his cousin Lucy in that memorable salute. Then he again put out his candle and resumed his post at the window. There was a light in one of the chambers of the big house over the way. It shone in Lucy's room, and on the muslin curtains of the window he could perceive the shadow of a slight form, which sometimes seemed to move about the room, and then anon, for awhile, would stand at rest. He could even guess, with great precision, what, from time to time, Lucy was doing. Now he felt convinced that she was standing at the mirror, arranging her hair. After that,

it was evident that she was tying on her night-cap. Presently, she came to the window, and, drawing the curtain a little to one side, peeped out, while, John, watching intently, forgot even to breathe, and came very near breaking a pane of glass with his nose. Then, careless girl, she went into her closet with the candle, as the glimmer through the curtain testified. If she should drop a spark there, and in the dead hours of the night the house should burst forth in flames, John thought how he would rush through the blazing windows, and bear the dear incendiary forth in safety, or perish with her in his arms. Then, for a brief space, the light burned steadily upon the table, and the shadow did not fall upon the curtain. Lucy was, doubtless, kneeling at her prayers. At last, she rose, peeped once more from the window, so that John was sure he caught a glimpse of one cheek, and the ruffle of her night-cap, and the next moment all was dark.

It was a warm and balmy spring night. The gentle breeze, laden with the fragrance of lilac

shrubs and blossoming orchards, seemed like the very breath of May, as it stirred the leaves of the big buttonwoods with a quiet, whispering rustle. The frogs in the river piped a melodious treble, and the roar of the mill-dam in the gorge came down upon the wind, softened to a deep undertone of harmonious bass. The plaintive notes of a whip-poor-will sounded faintly in the distance. There was a soft glow in the sky beyond the eastern hills, that announced the rising of the moon.

John was not insensible to the gentle influence of the time. The fever of his excitement abated. He was able to think with comparative calmness, to reason with himself concerning the state of his feelings, and to form resolutions and plans with respect to his future conduct. It was a grave question that he presently put to himself; and three long midnight hours did he give to it his consideration. Seated upon the foot of his bed, with the moonlight streaming in on his pale face, he pondered whether it was his duty to crush the

sweet hopes that so lately had sprang up in his heart, and with them crush the heart in which they grew withal.

Easy as it may seem to write or to read about it, this was, nevertheless, a stern and terrible trial, for the result was at times very doubtful, and upon that result, John knew, depended his hopes of earthly happiness. Had his conscience, sitting in judgment, decided against his inclination, the decree would have been executed.

The conclusion to which he at last arrived, as the stroke of one, from Walbury steeple, came vibrating through the silent air, he expressed aloud. "If she loved him," said he, "or even regarded him with indifference, I wouldn't try to thwart the will of my good, kind uncle, in the matter of his long cherished plan. I would tell him all; leave my mother and sister to his care; and never return until I could endure the misery of seeing Lucy the wife of another man. But she does not love him; she even dislikes, hates him. And who can wonder at it? To think of her being the

wife of such a fellow! She never could be happy! He hasn't heart enough to love her; and I—I have loved her from childhood. When I first met her in Hartford, the reason why I did not know her was, that I had cherished the image of her, as I had seen her last, so faithfully. But my heart knew its mistress! Then I struggled to overcome what I deemed to be a hopeless passion. But now I cannot believe that duty and honor require me to forego the effort to win that without which I can never be happy. So help me God, then, I will win her if I can—though I serve for her fourteen years, as Jacob did for Rachel!"

Having thus settled the matter in his own mind, John looked out of the window to see if all was safe across the way, and then, discerning no signs of danger, he quickly undressed himself and went to bed, and in spite of his passion he was fast asleep in ten minutes afterwards.

So it came to pass, that the next Sunday night, when young Joab Sweeny went down to call upon his cousin Lucy, and to open his

courting campaign, by repeating to his intended bride certain speeches and sayings which his mother had instructed him were proper and pertinent to the occasion, he had, without suspecting it, a most dangerous and determined rival.

CHAPTER V.

The male Yankee is born into the world with a latent desire in his heart to leave his home and go abroad to seek a fortune. No sooner is he weaned than this quality of his nature begins to be developed. It grows with his growth and strengthens with his strength, until, at last, like the instinct of the swarming bee, it irresistibly impels him to quit the shelter of his native roof, and begin the world on his own account, at a distance from the scenes of his brief childhood. But to this, like every other general rule, there are exceptions. This enterprising characteristic of the Yankee race is lacking in the constitution of some individuals; or, at least, is so dormant, sluggish, and imperfectly developed, that its feeble promptings fail to bring about the usual results. Such a Yankee, of the present generation, is like unto the salt that has lost its savor. Possessing, usually, to a marked degree, all the

evil qualities peculiar to his countrymen, as well as his share of those that are common to mankind in general, yet wanting, withal, the stern, untiring energy of will, and bold adventurous spirit by which the national character is ennobled and distinguished, he is apt to be a sneaking, small-souled fellow, whose shrewdness is but petty cunning, whose religion is only a slavish fear of the devil, whose piety is nothing more than a hypocritical show of sanctity, whose morality is a habit, begotten by the caution of a cold, unimpassioned nature, fearful to offend against public opinion, and whose love of country is a mere cat-like attachment to the spot where his eyes first blinked in the light of day.

Young Joab Sweeny was a perfect specimen of this narrow-minded class of home-keeping Yankee youth. While, with but few exceptions, his school-fellows had gone forth into the world, to begin the battle of life among strangers, he still remained a contented inhabitant of the Niptuck valley, a clerk in his father's store, waiting until the worthy Deacon should be, in the fullness of time, transferred

from the church militant to the church triumphant.

He was a tall, loose-jointed, broad-faced youth, with straight, black hair—except where he was prematurely bald—a pair of thin, silky whiskers; large, bony, white hands, and two long, spindling legs—the cause of his great stature—terminating in large, unshapely feet. He was narrow-shouldered, hollow-chested, and stooped in his gait; but as, in consequence of the nature of his employment, his pale and pimply face was not embrowned by the sun, like the farmer's boys', nor his hands, like theirs, hardened with toil, as he was usually dressed with comparative neatness and precision, wore a white neck-cloth, a watch and seals, a paste brooch in his shirt-bosom, and rings upon his fingers, and was accustomed to practice the suavities of his craft, he obtained and enjoyed among the ladies of Walbury, both young and old, the reputation of being an extremely good looking young man, of a remarkably genteel figure, and most engaging address; and there was many a pretty damsel in the congregation that each Sunday assembled in

the ancient meeting-house, who, in her heart, envied Lucy Manners the happy fortune that fate was supposed to have in store for her, as the chosen bride of young Joab Sweeny.

Like almost every other clerk in a country store, Joab had a marvelous taste and talent for psalmody. He played the flute and bass-viol with equal facility of execution—as, indeed, well he might, having abundant leisure for practice—and, moreover, sung tenor with a loud, blaring voice, and that peculiar nasal twang and intonation, by which godly, old-fashioned New Englanders are wont to be greatly edified. The possession of these accomplishments, together with the circumstance of his being a wealthy deacon's son, and a church-member in his own right, greatly favored his success in a little intrigue, which resulted in the deposition of the ancient leader of the choir, and his own elevation to the post thus made vacant.

At the stated semi-monthly meetings of the Sewing Circle and Dorcas Society, held alternately at the houses of the members during the winter season, young Joab rarely failed to be

present, in the evening after tea. On these social occasions he chiefly affected the company of the numerous and influential band of elderly maiden ladies, with whom he was eminently popular. It was really a spectacle well worth the looking at, to see this exemplary young man, dressed in sober black and smooth and spotless linen, with nicely combed hair and carefully brushed whiskers, sitting, at such times, primly upright, with knees and elbows bent at right angles, his thumbs sticking upwards, holding on his arms a skein of yarn for Miss Tabitha Graves to wind upon a ball, and meanwhile retailing to the group of admiring spinsters some piece of village scandal, selected from the vast fund of gossip which his position behind his father's counter enabled him to accumulate, or joining, with a great, choking, gurgling laugh, in the applause which his feminine friends were wont to bestow upon every sally of wit and smart speech that he essayed to utter.

It is not to be marveled at that Joab, conscious of his merits, and aware of the existing

treaty by which the elders had agreed upon the match between himself and his cousin Lucy, it is not wonderful, I say, that Joab looked forward to the term of courtship, without a doubt of its being succeeded by the blissful season of the honeymoon. Indeed, as he remarked to his worthy mother, it seemed like a mere matter of form to court Lucy at all, or even to ask her own consent. "It's all a settled thing," said he, "and, what's more, I and she both know it, and there ain't no rubbin' on't out. What's the use, then, in runnin' up to Uncle Starr's every Sunday night a-courting? What on earth shall we find to talk about for so many evenings? You see, mother," continued Joab, remembering with secret awe and rage the cold, brief sentence and haughty look with which Lucy had returned his greeting; "you see she's been gone from home so long, and has grown so big and stuck up, I don't feel acquainted and familiar with her as I used to."

"Law," replied Mrs. Axy, "'taint needful to keep a-talkin' to a gal all the time. Why,

yer father, when he used to come a-courtin', I've known him to set, and set, sometimes for an hour together, and skurse ever open his mouth, without it was to spit into the fire. But, talkin' or no talkin', go you must, for how would it look to be a-courtin' a gal, and not go and set up a spell with her o' Sunday nights. Your Uncle Starr wouldn't like it, and, besides, you orter go ef for nothin' only to keep other fellers away."

"Well," said Joab, "I suppose I can't do no less; and then, again, I expect I must make her presents once in a while. Now, I consider that's downright foolish. If I wasn't sure of having her, why, I shouldn't mind it so much, for it would kind o' seem to be a part of the expense of winning her; but as it is, it does really appear to me just like money thrown away."

"Well, as for that, Joab," replied the shrewd mother, "do you just mind to give her only them kind of presents as will last, and be useful after marriage. They'll all be your'n agin, then, you know."

In fine, both Joab and his mother, not without reason, looked upon the matter of the proposed marriage as something immutable, and were disposed to view the usual preliminaries of courtship in the light of tedious formalities, rendered necessary only by the force of imperative custom. When, therefore, at Joab's second Sunday night visit, he ventured, after much bashful circumlocution, to suggest to Lucy that, perhaps, it would be about as well, first as last, for them to ratify the contract already negotiated by their parents, he was informed by the young lady, in a very curt and decided manner, that she wished to take time to consider, before promising compliance, he was completely dumb-founded with angry surprise and perplexity. The Deacon's wife, too, when she was told of this perverse conduct on the part of her niece, was, at first, almost speechless with indignation; albeit, when she did find her tongue, she made herself ample amends for the temporary inability to use it. "The little pert, stuck-up hussy," said she; "the nasty, ugly, little trollop!" applying, if

you can believe me, these unsavory epithets to our charming Lucy; "she wants time to think on't, does she? Let her father get hum from Har'ford, and we'll see? He'll make up her mind for her, I guess! He'll let her and her meddlin' fool of a mother know who's master. But Betsy Dashleigh needn't think she's a-goin' to break up this match. She can't alwus lead Starr by the nose, and this time she'll find it out. Oh—h—h!" cried Mrs. Sweeny, shutting her teeth with a strong aspiration; "how I should like to give that woman a piece of my mind!"

During the week which followed next after this unexpected check, Colonel Manners arrived at home. Shad time having gone by, and given place to the haying season, the General Assembly had finished its labors in a hurry, and had adjourned without day. It was not long, I warrant you, before the Colonel was informed of the discouragement which Joab had received in the prosecution of his suit. "Pooh! Pooh! Axy," said he, in reply to his irate sister, "you've jest got yourself into a fret for nothin'.

Why, I had a talk with the gal to Har'ford, not a month ago! She knows she's a-goin' to have Joab, and expects to, like a dootiful darter; but don't ye see, she wants the privilege of doin' and sayin' jest as ef it wa'n't all agreed on. When wimmen don't have their own way, they alwus like to play they do, anyhow. It's nateral for her to act jest as she doos. I don't blame her a mite. Joab, I hain't no doubt, talked jest as ef he had a morgidge on her, and could foreclose any minnit, and that kind o' riled her, for she's full o' sperit, now I tell ye. Jest let him keep a-goin' to see her reglar, and let him act kind o' softly, and perlite, and genteel, jest as ef he didn't know nothin' o' no agreement, but depended on gettin' her willin' himself, and was obliged to afore he could expect to have her, and let him ask her to play on her pianny-forty, and bring down his floot, and play with her, and my word for't, it'll all come right."

"Anyhow, you'd better speak to her, and let her know there ain't no gettin' off," said the Deacon's wife.

"I sha'n't do no sich a thing," replied the Colonel, positively. "It'll only jist make her set agin it. There ain't no hurry. Let things take their nateral course."

The Colonel was decided; and his sister, after scolding to her heart's content, was obliged to acquiesce.

CHAPTER VI.

One fine morning, soon after the Colonel's return, John Dashleigh, with a gang of hands, began to mow the barn-lot, and for the next four weeks the Colonel was so busy looking on, while John and his men gathered in the plentiful harvests of hay, rye, and oats, that he had little time to give heed to the matter of Joab's courtship. Each morning he was stirring by the time that the birds began to sing, and he went to bed every night as soon as he had eaten a hearty supper, and snored away till day broke again, with scarcely a pause. Never had the crops been heavier; never had there been a finer season for securing them; and never had even Andrew Bunn himself given the Colonel such complete satisfaction in the performance of this labor, as did his new overseer, John Dashleigh. The Colonel was loud in his praises: "he is the best farmer I ever see of his age," he would say to his wife; "so handy and keerful. You don't ketch him a

sojerin' and takin' the long end of the lever because he's capt'in. He jist takes the lead, and, says he, 'come on,' and the feller don't live that can cut his corners. And then he's so much tact and kalkelation for so young a chap. Actilly, he gets more work out of five men, and keeps 'em all the time good-natered and ambitious, than any head-man I ever had could out of seven."

And it was, indeed, a sight right well worth beholding, to see John Dashleigh at the head of his file of men, sweeping away before him the tall herds-grass, laden with glittering dew-drops, at every steady swing of his long scythe-blade, and leaving behind him a broad swarth, wider by six inches than that of any of his followers. At least this was Lucy's opinion, as she watched him one morning from her chamber-window, and took silent note of the fine proportions of his tall figure, displayed, it must be confessed, to the best advantage in the graceful motions of his labor. And as often as she met him in the house, at meal times and noonings, in spite of his apparel, coarse and often soiled, and in spite of the sweat and dust

of toil that frequently disfigured his merry face, she never failed to think what a good-looking man was her cousin John.

In New England, during the severe labors of the hay-harvest, the "men-folks" are a privileged class. When, answering to the welcome summons of the dinner-horn, their whoop is heard faintly sounding from the distant field, forthwith ensues a bustle in the farmer's kitchen, and, by the time the sweaty band arrive, and have laved their sun-browned faces in cool water, at the stone trough by the well-curb, the substantial dinner is steaming upon the table. No meagre diet doth the Yankee haymaker feed upon; but hearty beef and pork, garnished with garden-sauce in season; new potatoes, beets, beans and peas, green corn and succotash. The best that the house affords is set ungrudgingly before him, and, though he be a negro, he is served at his meals by the mistress herself and her white-armed daughters.

Lucy used to take an especial pleasure in waiting upon John, as he sat like a baron at the head of the table; helping him to choice mor-

sels of the victuals, filling his glass with cool water or sparkling cider, and, in fine, anticipating all the wishes of his appetite. Many a dainty pie and loaf of cake found its way into the luncheon-basket, that would have remained in the buttery if it had not been for Lucy's providence. The Colonel's hands, that summer, fared sumptuously every day, both in the house and in the field. "Tell ye," said old Black Tite, one day, moved to enthusiasm by discovering in the bottom of the firkin a half a dozen cups of custard, and a bottle of currant wine; "ef Joab Sweeny dont jis get a prize, when he gets Miss Loosy, den der ain't no bumble-bees."

In the evening, when the toil of the long, sultry day was over, John, after making himself tidy, would frequently go into the parlor, where he would find Lucy and little Ellen, between whom a very ardent friendship had been revived, so that they were seldom apart. Lucy always welcomed him with a smile, that made him forget in a single moment the weariness occasioned by a whole day of hard labor. She would insist upon his taking a seat in the big rocking-chair; and then going to the piano,

she would play over his favorite airs. She had a sweet little warbling voice, like a canary bird's; just suited to the songs that John most loved to hear; and I do not believe that either Jenny Lind or Sontag ever sung to so admiring an auditory as Lucy used to have at these pleasant little concerts, in the evenings of the haying season. Little Ellen thought her cousin Lucy the handsomest and most accomplished creature in the world, and John's good opinion was not a whit the less exalted. Sometimes, when Lucy got tired of playing and singing, she and Ellen would go and sit down together on the threshold of the front doorway, with their arms around each other's waists. John would take his place upon the broad step-stone at their feet; and there the three would sit in the still twilight, and talk about all manner of things. Lucy would tell over her reminiscences of the Misses Primber's school, and relate numerous anecdotes of her schoolmates, until Ellen got to know all the young ladies by name, as well as if she had actually been acquainted with them in person; and John was able, by means of Lucy's vivid descriptions, to recog-

nize those of them who had been her companions on the occasion of his meeting her in the street at Hartford. Then John, in turn, would give accounts of the distant and wonderful Genesee country, and tell stories of wolves, bears, panthers and Indians, some of which were so frightful, heard in the dim, shadowy gloaming, that the girls would beg him to come and sit between them on the threshold.

Sometimes, when it was moonlight, they used to go out and sit on the bench, under the big elm, or stroll up and down the gravel walk in the front yard, or may be go across the street to the widow's cottage. It so happened, one night, that they found Mrs. Manners there, and they all had a very merry time together, listening to the anecdotes which the two matrons told of the babyhood of Lucy and John. Mrs. Dashleigh gave, at great length, a minute and circumstantial account of the dangerous accident which had befallen Lucy when she was a two-year old, in falling down the cellar bulkhead, while John listened shudderingly, and thought what a gloomy, sad-colored world it would have been if she had been killed. After

this, the widow recalled to mind some funny baby-talk of Lucy's, and repeated it; and this suggested to Mrs. Manners some queer speech, or other which John had made while he was yet in petticoats. Both the ladies agreed with respect to the marvelous fondness which Lucy and John had manifested for each other in their childhood, and fortified their joint testimony by alternately relating corroborative incidents.

"And don't you remember, Polly," cried Mrs. Manners, offering her snuff-box to her sister, "how they always used to play they was husband and wife?"

"Law! well! I guess I do!" replied the widow. "I remember the first time his pa ever got him a new pair of boots; high ones, you know, with legs to 'em like men's I re-c'lect——"

"Oh! I never shall forget it," cried Mrs. Manners, interrupting; "he come right up to our house, and walked in as proud——"

"And said," interpolated Mrs. Dashleigh.

"And, says he," continued Mrs. Manners, raising her voice and speaking more rapidly, so that her sister gave up the floor without further

contest; "and, says he, a hauling up his trowsers, so's to show his boot-legs; now, says he, I'm a man, like pa, and big enough to marry Lucy!"

"And, don't you think—" began the widow.

"And, if you'll believe me," pursued the irresistible Mrs. Manners, addressing John and Lucy as if they were not themselves; "both them little creturs cried like babies, as they was, because Miss Graham, that was up to our house a tailorin', told 'em, real sort o' cross like, that they want nigh old enough yet."

"She was a spiteful cretur, that Miss Graham," said the widow.

"Indeed she was," replied her sister; "she went up that very night, and told the Deacon's wife all about it, and Sally Blake, that was, Sally Bunn, that is now, told me afterwards, that a madder woman she never heerd scold. Actilly, she whipped Sally, and sent her to bed without any supper, when the poor little gal hadn't done anything out of the way."

After this manner, the two elder ladies continued their gossip, to the infinite edification and amusement of their juniors. It was very

late, indeed; nay, almost ten o'clock, when Mrs. Manners, at the conclusion of a narrative of the adventures of Lucy's first school-day, under John's guardianship, quietly slipped out into the kitchen, whither the widow directly followed her, leaving Lucy with John and Ellen in the front room. Presently, Mrs. Dashleigh returned, and upon being inquired of by Lucy, declared that Mrs. Manners, having looked at the clock, had departed in a great haste, apparently quite forgetful that she was leaving Lucy behind her. Of course, when Lucy got up from her chair, and said that she must hurry home too, John rose also, and offered to be her beau across the street; and Ellen was going, too, but her mother told her it was too late, and that she must stay; at which the little damsel was greatly dissatisfied.

It was a most lovely midsummer night; still, warm, and fragrant. The moon, in a cloudless sky, was nearly at its full; and its rays, at this hour, almost vertical, came shimmering down through the dense foliage of the great elm that stood in the little lawn in front of Colonel Manners' house, and silvered the leaves of the

lilacs and syringas which grew about the door The clumps of shrubbery, and the fruit trees in the orchards, cast deep circular shadows upon the ground beneath them. The slender spire of the meeting-house steeple, in the village hard by, glistened like a silver needle, and stood up, strangely tall and far away into the deep blue sky. The intervale meadows, covered with a dense, low-lying mist, seemed like some broad river or wide arm of the sea; the nearer trees and copses looming up like islands, and the hills beyond, like the distant further shore. Even the sense of hearing aided the illusion; for the subdued murmur of the far off water-fall in the northern glen sounded to the ear so like the noise of surf upon a shelving sandy beach, that one suddenly set down upon the spot would have found it difficult to realize that he was in an inland district, many miles away from the sea. All else was breathlessly still, except the chirping of the crickets and katydids, and the hushed whisper of the zephyr among the leaves, that served only to make the silence audible.

Now, John Dashleigh, when he had deliber-

ately made up his mind to do a thing, never dreamed of putting off, without good cause, the execution of his purpose; but proceeded at once to action, as soon as ever he was ready and had an opportunity. Though he had but little experience in love affairs, his common sense taught him that it was dangerous to be dilly-dallying and hesitating about declaring himself, and, withal, he had been by no means an unobservant witness of the weekly recurrence of Joab's Sunday evening visits. He had, therefore, fully resolved to avail himself of the first favorable opportunity to tell Lucy that he loved her, and to ask of her the momentous question, whether there was any reason for him to hope that his love might be returned. I would not have it supposed, however, that John was confident of receiving a reply such as he wished to hear, for I firmly believe there was never in the world a lover more modest than he, or who was less sensible of his own merits. The hope that he cherished had just enough force to prompt him to avow his love. "There may be a chance for me," he would say to himself; and I assure you he was not the

man to forego trying even one chance in a thousand, or to shrink with unmanly dread from learning thereby the fate in store for him.

John and Lucy had got no further than the gate of Colonel Manners' front yard, when he began. "Lucy," said he, with a tremor in his voice that he could not control, "before you go into the house, I wish to say something to you which, perhaps, may displease you—but until you bid me stop, or I see you are angry or annoyed, I shall speak on till I have finished."

Now, that little puss, Lucy, knew as well as John Dashleigh himself did what he was about to say; nevertheless, of course, as is the way with women at such times, when they are nothing loth to listen, she dissembled, and appeared to be unaware of John's intentions, and affected a cool surprise and faint wonder; though, if the truth were only known, it would appear that her heart was throbbing so wildly she was actually afraid John would hear its thumping. "Pray, cousin John," said she, as soon as she dared to trust her voice, "what can you be going to say to me that you think will displease me?" "I wish to tell you Lucy,"

said John, replying to the question in the only manner that he was accustomed to use—that is to say, in the most straightforward way in the world—"I wish to tell you that I love you so well, that I cannot find words to express myself."

"Why—y! John!" cried Lucy, as if she were very much surprised, and affecting a reproachful manner.

"I have offended you, I know," said John, who, in his simplicity, thought he had shocked his fair cousin by his audacious avowal; and his heart grew so heavy that it came near weighing him to the ground. He looked down into her face. There was never anything so beautiful as it was in the soft moonlight that shone upon it. She did not raise her eyes, and he felt sure that she was angry. The feeble hope that hitherto had sustained him died away in his heart, and the void it left ached with a torture so intense that, in spite of his manhood, he could not endure it without complaint. The words came to his lips without his consent, even against his will. "Oh! God! I cannot bear it!" said he, in a tone so full of despair that Lucy looked up in a sudden fright, and the

roguish smile which he had not observed vanished from her lips. She saw the expression of keen agony apparent upon his pale features; and the instinct of coquetry—which I regret to say had a place in her heart—was at once shamed and subdued, by the sight of his distress. She felt almost appalled at finding herself loved with such a strength of passion; and the deep springs of womanly tenderness welled up in her heart with a sudden overflow. She had suspected herself, before, of loving John, though she had not been entirely certain; but from that moment she never doubted again that he was dearer to her than all the world besides.

It may not be fair, even for an author, to expose to the world the secrets of a maiden's heart, but the truth is that Lucy had been almost as strongly impressed by John's appearance, on the occasion of meeting him on the street at Hartford, as he himself had been at seeing her. The young lady with whom she used to sleep at the Misses Primber's Seminary, and for whom she, at that time, entertained an undying affection, which was fully reciprocated—this young lady, I say, (who is, by the by,

at the present time, the grandmother of four chubby children,) can testify, that not long after the occasion which has just been alluded to, Lucy confessed to her, in a moment of confidence, that the Handsome Forester was her very beau-ideal of manly beauty; and that she wished "heaven had made her such a man," and had given him the means to dress a little more in accordance with the prevailing fashions. No small part of Lucy's surprise, when John dropped out of the pear-tree, was due to her recognition of Robin Hood in the person of the youth prostrate at her feet, and at finding him to be the cousin John of whom she had always preserved so affectionate a remembrance. As I have already told you, the womanly instinct which so seldom errs, revealed to her that John was in love with her; and when she came to reflect upon this discovery, she found that it afforded her a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction; though she did not as yet suspect how nearly the condition of her own heart resembled that of her cousin's. It was not a great while, however, before she detected herself thinking that, if Joab were only like John,

how much less strong would be her aversion to the proposed marriage. She was alone in her room, before the glass, tying on her night-cap and striving to coax the rebellious curls into something like order, and at first she hardly dared to meet the glance of her own eyes in the mirror. She felt that she was blushing; and so she leaned her head on the little white dimity toilet table, and did not look up again for a long while. She asked her heart the question, whether it was not that it loved John which caused her to wish that Joab resembled him; and in reply her deceitful little heart told her a falsehood, and persuaded her that the sentiment in question was nothing more than merely a warm cousinly regard and affection.

"You are to marry Joab, you know," whispered the heart, "and of course it is not wonderful you should wish him to be more like John; for Joab—between ourselves—is anything but lovable; while John," continued the heart, throbbing violently, "is a handsome, agreeable, noble, manly young fellow, who, if he had had the one-half of Joab's advantages,

would have made just the lover and husband we have dreamed about sometimes."

"Mere cousinly regard!" repeated Lucy; "and are you sure that this is all?"

"Perfectly sure," faltered the heart.

"And ought I not to be somewhat careful of you, for fear lest I shall lose you?" says Lucy; "and should I not conduct myself towards John with a little more reserve?"

"Pooh!" replies the heart, "thank you for nothing; let me take care of myself; and do you treat John as he deserves; for he is a kinsman, worthy of your best cousinly love. But," continued the heart, with a flutter, "do as you please; I am not at all interested in the matter."

"But on John's account;" persisted Lucy. "Will not he get to loving me too much, and so be miserable when I am finally married to Joab?"

"You are a vain, conceited creature," replies the heart; concealing a pang of sudden pain, by retorting in this way; "how do you know that John loves you any more than he ought to love a cousin and an old playmate? And even

if he does love you a little more warmly than this, he will forget you easily," (and here there was another keen pang,) "and marry somebody else;" and here there came a third pang, so violent that Lucy burst into tears, and cried with her head still on the table, until at last she put out her light in a hurry, and got into bed, where, after a while, she sobbed herself to sleep.

Now, though the heart caused itself a deal of distress by suggesting this notion of John's marrying some other girl, it could not have done a thing which would have aided, to a greater degree, the deception of which it had been guilty. For Lucy was thereby persuaded to fancy herself thinking of John, as if he were already the lover and suitor of this imaginary mistress; and her heart kept on assuring her that of course there could be no danger of loving him too well. Besides, this idea prevented her from feeling for John that tenderness which would have alarmed her, and put her upon her guard. Indeed, there were sometimes, when this fancy was uppermost in her mind, that she carried herself towards him with

a coolness and reserve which caused him no little pain. However, these occasions were unfrequent; for, as I have told you, in obedience to the impulses of her heart, she usually treated him with the kindness and distinction due to so near and worthy a kinsman. But when, on the night that John declared his love, Lucy was forewarned by his manner of his intention to do so, her treacherous little heart began to beat with such a tumultuous delight and sweet alarm, that it was no longer able to deceive its mistress; and, as I have already related, the emotion which filled her soul at the spectacle of John's anguish, caused by her supposed indifference, testified so plainly, with respect to the condition of her own feelings, that she could not help being convinced. She acknowledged to herself that she loved him with all her heart; and then she hastened to relieve the pain that he was suffering. She took his hand, and without thinking of herself, or giving heed to the proprieties of maidenly reserve, she looked up straight into his face.

"John," said she, "dear John; if it will

give you pleasure to know that—I——love you——"

When Lucy had got as far as this she hesitated, and then paused; for she saw that she had said enough for her purpose; and, besides, it is somewhat of an enterprise, for a lady to tell a gentleman, for the first time in the world, that she loves him, except in a whispered monosyllable, by the way of reply to an urgent and oft repeated question. But, notwithstanding the incompleteness of the sentence, John thought he had never before heard anything so perfect. He could hardly believe his senses, and he would have doubted the evidence of his ears, but that this testimony was corroborated by the soft and bewitching confusion of Lucy's manner; for, no sooner had she ceased speaking, than she dropped her eyelids, and looked down upon the ground, her head drooping with modest concern, at the boldness of her speech; while her face was suffused with a charming blush, that could be perceived even by the moonlight.

For a single moment John stood still and uncovered his head. I am not ashamed to con

fess, that during this brief pause he uttered a fervent thanksgiving to the good God. The impulse of every man's heart prompts him, when suddenly made conscious of the gift of a great blessing, or when first assured of deliverance from great peril, to do what John Dashleigh did; but it is not every one who, like him, would obey his good impulses at such a time. Lucy observed this emotion of gratitude, and its devout expression; and I assure you that she loved him none the less, but rather the more, for that the first impulse of his adoration had been, not towards her, but to the great Giver of all good gifts.

I shall not relate further what was said and done by John and Lucy, during the remainder of the time they were together that memorable evening; because, as they talked mostly in whispers, and low murmurs, audible only to themselves, it is plain enough that they did not wish to be overheard and reported. Let it suffice, then, to say that when, an hour afterwards, they parted at the step-stone of the front door, and he took advantage of the shadow of a lilac-bush to press a prolonged kiss upon her

lips, he had a perfect and indefeasible right so to do. She was entirely willing to be bidden good-night in that pleasant fashion—as well, indeed, she might be—for she had promised to marry John, and he had promised to marry Lucy.

When Lucy went into the house she found her mother sitting up and waiting for her. As soon as she took off her bonnet, looked up at the clock, and, in a whisper, began to stammer excuses for staying out so late, her mother laid down her knitting-work, and looked up into her blushing face with such a shrewd, kind, knowing, inquiring smile, that Lucy was persuaded by it not to put off the confession which she had resolved to defer until the morning, but to tell at once what had happened. She was a little embarrassed, and at a loss how to begin; but when her mother put her arm about her waist, and kissed her head, as she leaned it against her bosom, and whispered softly, "tell me all about it, my child," the words came of themselves, right out of her full heart.

They sat there together until the candle

burned down to its socket, talking in whispers; while in the bedroom hard by, the good Colonel, against whose cherished project they were plotting, tired with his afternoon's labor in the hayfield, slept, oblivious of the danger and his cares. Once in a while his sonorous, measured snoring would cease for a moment, and the two women would listen with bated breath, until, with a vigorous puff and snort, the sleeper would start off again upon another heat, and the whispered conference would be resumed. At last, when the tall, old-fashioned clock in the corner began to splutter its warning, before striking the hour of two, Mrs. Manners kissed the glowing cheek of her daughter, and with another low murmured assurance that she herself would manage to bring everything to a happy result, bade her good-night; and Lucy, after returning her mother's kiss, lit her candle and tripped up stairs, with a heart as light as love and hope could make it, and her eyes as sparkling and wide awake as they had ever appeared of a morning, after a long, sound night's slumber. When she got up into her chamber, she put her light down upon the table,

and went to the open window, to look out upon the bench under the big elm tree; a spot evermore to be endeared to her by having been the place where she and her lover had plighted faith to each other.

The moon was still shining brightly, and she was not a little startled at beholding John Dashleigh, standing with Boatswain in the shadow of the tree. He was not so far off but that she could hear him speak, in a low, quick tone, as she came to the window. "Don't be afraid," said he, advancing towards the house as he spoke, until he came and stood among the thick lilac-bushes that grew before the parlor windows. "It's me," said John, again looking up.

"But why have you not gone home?" whispered Lucy, secretly pleased, withal, that her lover had not found it in his heart to go to bed like a sensible man, but had preferred to stay out in the moonlight, haunting the neighborhood of the big elm, during the short hours.

"I saw that you did not go up to your room," replied John, "and so I have been

waiting and watching. You have been talking with Aunt Betsy?"

"Yes;" said Lucy with great vivacity, "and it's all right! I have told her everything, and just as we thought, she is on our side! Hurrah!"

"And what does she say?" asked John, eagerly.

"I mustn't, on any account, tell papa, at present. She will manage all that—"

"And Joab?"

"Ah! that's the worst of it, John. She says that I must let Joab continue his horrid visits, though I may tell him that I don't like either him or his visits, and will never be willing to marry him. After that, she says, he can have no reason to complain whatever may happen."

"Well," said John, in a doubtful tone, "for my part I must own that I think the plainest and most straightforward way is, usually, the best way. However, Aunt Betsy is a very wise and sensible woman, and—"

At this moment, Boatswain, upon whose doggish nature and sensibilities the moonlight had been exercising its wonted influence, and

who, besides, though evidently unwilling to entertain ill-natured suspicions, concerning John's motives in lurking about the house at midnight, had, nevertheless, in secret, been greatly disturbed in his mind thereby, Boatswain, I say, suddenly threw back his head, stuck his nose into the air, and through the wide calibre of his capacious throat gave vent to an obstreperous howl, which was intended partly as a serenade to the man in the moon, and partly by way of respectful, but earnest remonstrance against the further continuance of John's singular and ill-timed proceedings.

"Heavens! what a noise!" cried Lucy, who had been at first almost scared out of her wits by Boatswain's outcry.

"Hush-sh, hush up! get out, you brute!" cried John, stamping on the ground.

"Ow-ow-oo-o-o-o-woo," howled the dog, still with his muzzle pointing towards the zenith, but looking sideways at John with an intelligent leer, as if he would say, "I'm right, and you know it. You ought to be a-bed at this time o' night, and not be here under Lucy's window. You're a young man, and a friend of

mine, and probably don't mean any harm; but your conduct isn't proper, and I can't help saying so—ow-ow-oo-o-woo."

John's conscience was smitten by this reproof, which was as intelligible as if it had been uttered in the plainest English. So he threw up a kiss to Lucy, and she dropped one down to him, and they bade each other good-night. Then Lucy pretended to draw the curtains close, but left a peep-hole through which she watched John as he went along down the gravel walk, accompanied by Boatswain, who appeared to be exceedingly gratified at his retreat; though, to be sure, when John turned to latch the wicket after him, the dog came up and licked his hand, snuffing and wagging his tail with an apologetic manner; as if to express a hope that no offense whatever would be taken at his well-meant outcry, but that the cordial friendship, which ever since the affair of the pear-tree had subsisted between them, might, notwithstanding, continue unbroken.

John stood upon the doorstep of his mother's cottage until he saw the light extinguished in Lucy's room. Then, softly pressing the latch,

and gently pushing the door ajar, he went in, and was walking on tiptoe across the narrow kitchen floor, towards the stairs that led to his attic, when he heard his mother's voice calling to him in a subdued but distinct tone. He turned and went to the door of her little bed room. She was in bed, leaning on her elbow; while little Ellen slept soundly by her side, with the moonlight shining in upon her pretty face.

"I have disturbed you, I'm afraid, mother," said John.

"No, my son, I have not yet been asleep, to-night," said Mrs. Dashleigh, and then, in a moment after, she asked, "What does Lucy say?"

"Mother!" cried John, in surprise.

"Did you think, my darling, I had not guessed your secret?" said the widow. Then there was a pause, while the kitchen clock ticked loudly. "She is mine, mother," said John, at last. "Thank God!"

"Thank God," repeated the widow, suddenly lying down with her face upon the pillow. Poor woman; the instinct of a mother's heart had revealed to her that John was loving his

fair cousin so well that his life's happiness was staked upon the issue. She had divined his resolution to leave his home and seek in absence to conquer his passion if he should fail to win Lucy's love.

"Then you know all, mother?" asked John.

"I knew that you loved Lucy," replied the widow, looking up.

"And aunt Betsy?"

"She went home alone to-night on purpose to give you the opportunity to speak to Lucy which she thought you wished for."

"God bless her!" said John, with fervency.

"I have been watching you through the window all the livelong night," continued Mrs. Dashleigh. "I havn't had my eyes off from you since you first went out till you came to the door again. I saw you sitting on the bench with Lucy, in the shadow, and though I couldn't see you then so plain, I guessed you'd been successful. So I went to bed, but still kept peeping through the window; but when, after she went in, you stayed in the yard, walking about so like a distracted person, I feared all had gone wrong."

"No, mother," cried John, gaily; "all is right; at least," said he, correcting himself, "all but getting Uncle Starr's consent; that yet remains to be done."

"Just leave that matter to your aunt Betsy," said his mother. "She can bring it about, she says, though I don't well see how. But now kiss me, and run to bed. You'll not feel like haying it to-morrow, poor boy."

"Humph!" said John, shaking himself; "why, mother, I could pitch a ton of hay over the big beam in five minutes, and not feel it! I'm as strong as an ox. Never fear that I shan't do a good day's work to-morrow. A light heart makes light labor."

And, in point of fact, when the sun went down after his next rising, John had performed such wonders in the hayfield, that to this day old Tite recounts them by way of illustrating his favorite theory of the degeneracy of the later generation; until at last the story has grown so marvelous as to be beyond sober belief.

CHAPTER VII.

The last great wain-load of red-top and clover had long since been hauled home from the most distant outland meadow, and with much clamor and rejoicing had been safely garnered upon the lofty summit of the fragrant mow. Where, erewhile, had waved fields of stout timothy, and golden oats and barley, now herds of cattle roamed at will, gleaning after the reapers, unchecked by gates and bars, and safe from molestation and pursuit, as trespassers, by angry men and dogs. The pipe of the quail was heard among the patches of yellow stubble that checkered the yet green hill-sides. The maize stalks, bending with the weight of lusty ears, had been despoiled of their nodding plumes; and between their long rows, hosts of round, yellow pumpkins lay ripening in the sun, among the withered vines. In the orchards, beneath the trees, the fallen fruit reddened the ground. Great heaps of rosy apples were piled beside the sheds, where

all day long the creaking cider-mills uttered loud complaints, while from the press hard by the rich must trickled from the pummice, with a pleasant, tinkling sound, into the brimming vats. The foliage of the woods upon the western cliffs was mottled with gaudy hues of red and yellow. Even the crowns of the hardy elms were no longer green, and each rude breath of wind shook from aloft a shower of rustling leaves. In the chilly mornings, beneath the oaks and chestnuts, the frosty sward was bestrewn with mast, where provident squirrels, mindful of the coming winter, filled their capacious cheeks, and then scampered nimbly homewards with their spoil along the tops of walls and fences. The berries of the mountain ash and asparagus, and the capsules on the rose bushes had grown to ruddy maturity. By the roadside the withered milkweeds displayed the glossy, silken contents of their bursting pods, and the hazy air was full of thistle-down and floating gossamer. The frowzy pastures were bright with the yellow blossoms of the golden-rod and mullein. The measured, muffled thump of flails, and the

clatter of fanning-mills all day resounded through the valley. All night the pensive crickets chirped the requiem of departed summer, and petulant katydids joined in the melancholy chorus with harsh, dissonant cries. October, the month of plenty, had arrived, with its bright but dwindling days and hale and frosty nights.

It was a warm and sunny Sunday afternoon, and the staid and pious population of Walbury had assembled, for the second service, within the walls of their ancient meeting-house. The scripture had been read, the first hymn sung, the long prayer devoutly uttered, to the final amen, and the weary-footed congregation, once more seated at their ease, had listened admiringly to the singers in the gallery, while, with various rates of speed, each had followed, as best he might, in the wake of Joab, bravely leading them through the intricate windings, turnings, and doublings of that famous old fugue melody of "Majesty." The Parson had put on his spectacles and risen to his feet, and Deacon Sweeny, as was his custom of a Sunday afternoon, had thrown over his bald crown a

red bandanna handkerchief, and, leaning his reverend head against a post that stood handily in the corner of his pew, had comfortably disposed himself for a quiet nap. But when, instead of opening at once the well-worn covers of his sermon-book, and giving out the text, Parson Graves slowly spread out before him on the desk a broad, stiff sheet of crackling paper, and began to read, with an unusual inflation of tone and pomposity of manner, "By His Excellency, the Governor of the State of Connecticut—A Proclamation;" the Deacon quickly roused himself, snatched the covering from his head, and sat upright beside his rigid spouse. Every eye was fixed upon the aged minister, and every ear was strained to catch the mangled syllables as they fell from his sunken lips. Even the mischievous boys, in the high fastness of the side galleries, shut their jack-knives and peered over the tops of the pews, where, secure from observation, they were wont to disport themselves during the tedious sermon time, and gave strict heed, for once, to what was proclaimed from the pulpit. Straightway, in the excited imaginations of these in-

genuous youth, rose appetizing visions of broad pewter platters, whereon lay sprawling on their backs huge turkeys, which as yet stalked monarchs of the noisy poultry-yard; of mighty pasties, hot from the oven, with crisp and melting crusts bulging upwards like a dome, and pregnant with tender, delectable morsels of dismembered chickens; of other pies, skillfully compounded of pumpkins, mince-meat, or apples; of round-bellied puddings, speckled with plums and unctuous with suet, and of numerous other spicy dainties that are wont to load the groaning tables at Thanksgiving-time. Nay, I fear not to aver that even the mouth of Parson Graves himself watered as he enunciated, with sonorous emphasis, the concluding words—"By His Excellency's command: Thomas Day, Secretary;" and folding up the document laid it carefully between the leaves of the big Bible; for, albeit he was nearly toothless, he was, nevertheless, a stout and famous trencherman, a quality that had greatly enhanced his popularity among two generations of notable Walbury housewives.

But, though, in like manner, the minds of

nearly all the congregation, thus suddenly diverted from things spiritual, were busy with thoughts and anticipations relating to the household cares and carnal delights which pertain to the annual feast-day of New England, there were a few among the hearers of the proclamation, to whom it was suggestive of ideas of a different kind. Thus, while Deacon Sweeny was going through with a mental calculation of the probable profits that would accrue to him, by reason of the increased demand for raisins, ginger, all-spice and molasses, which experience had taught him to expect as incidental to the season, Mrs. Axy, his amiable consort, was forming a determination to avail herself of the very first opportunity to call the matter of Joab's and Lucy's wedding to the mind of her brother. The Colonel, himself, somewhat pricked in the conscience for his neglect and procrastination, was resolving to delay no longer, but to open the same subject that very night to his wife, and to enjoin upon her and Lucy the commencement of a series of preparations for the momentous event. Mrs. Manners, with lips a little compressed, was

slily watching the face of her sister-in-law, the Deacon's wife, occasionally giving a quick glance of observation at the Colonel, though, meanwhile, she affected to be gazing steadfastly towards the pulpit. Lucy, upon another seat of the pew, was pouting with anger, and almost ready to cry with vexation, because Joab, from the gallery, facing her, was trying to catch her eye, and, when he thought he had succeeded in this maneuver, to convey to her the intelligence of what was passing in his own mind. John, duly observant of Joab's winks and leers, was one moment tingling with suppressed wrath, and, at the next, flushing in an extatic agony of anxious hope, when he recalled to mind the confident prediction of his aunt Betsy, that never, the longest day of his life, would Joab Sweeny be the husband of Lucy Manners.

Thirty years ago, the New England Sabbath ended at set of sun. When, closely watched by impatient children, the orb of day slid slowly down the western sky, and finally vanished from the sight, beyond the distant mountains, a universal shout of juvenile glad-

ness saluted his departure; and even the grave visages of the elders, weary with the strait religious aspect, relaxed into unwonted smiles. Then commenced noisy sports upon the village green, and sprucely attired swains set forth to where buxom damsels, all made ready to be courted, awaited the coming of their beaux. Then, thrifty housewives, of the brisk and bustling sort, were accustomed to begin the weekly labor of the wash-tub and pounding-barrel. No one need be shocked or surprised, therefore, to hear that Colonel Manners and his godly brother-in-law, the Deacon, met each other, that Sunday night, at the bar-room of the tavern, where, of a Sabbath evening, it was the habit of the village elders to assemble for the purposes of social intercourse, the exchange of news and opinions, and the discussion of town, state, and national affairs and politics. These conclaves selected, from time to time, the candidates for selectmen and deputies to the General Assembly, and the town and freemen's meetings rarely failed to ratify these nominations. Each of the grave seniors, in his turn, used to call for a mug of flip or sling, which,

when prepared by the landlord, was passed from hand to hand, and from mouth to mouth. Even Parson Graves himself not unfrequently took his seat at the bar-room fire, and though he never paid a reckoning, like the rest of the company, it was not because he abstained from imbibing his full share of the good liquor furnished by the smiling publican. Those were good old times, when every man had a stomach under his waistcoat, for whose sake he deemed it his duty to drink a little of something more potent than water.

But our fathers kept early hours, and so, soon after the clock struck nine, Deacon Sweeny and the Colonel started on their way homewards. At the Deacon's gate, they paused for a moment, and just as the Colonel was about to resume his walk, Mrs. Axy appeared at the door, and invited her brother to come into the house. "I expect," said she, as she closed the door behind him with a slam, and casting a look of wormwood and vinegar at her spouse; "I expect the Deacon was a goin' to let you marvel right straight along hum, arter all my wearin' myself out a tellin' him, over

and over agin, to be sure and have you step in here a minute, ef he found you to the tavern—the most kerless crittur I——"

"Come, come, Axy," cried the Colonel, who, since he had paid the sixty-five hundred dollars, often ventured to make head against the torrent of his sister's scolding; "now, you jest shet up, and let the Deacon have a minute's peace; or, by jingo! I'll clear out without ever offerin' to set down."

To this rebuke, Mrs. Sweeny, who had an especial reason why she did not wish to displease or irritate her brother, made no reply, but discreetly restrained her wrath; though, as the Deacon well knew, and trembled at the consciousness, it never lost any of its vigor by being pent up in this way; but, like small beer, was all the more lively, pungent, noisy and sparkling, for being bottled awhile.

After Sally Blake's unfortunate successor had brought in a dish of Early Greening apples, and a pitcher of brisk new cider, and then, in obedience to a sharp-toned command of her mistress, had crept up, in the dark, to her nest in the garret, Mrs. Sweeny, without further

delay, brought forward for consideration the subject of the proposed alliance. What was afterwards said and done by and between the high contracting parties, in Deacon Sweeny's presence and hearing, during the remainder of the interview, it would be tedious to relate, for Mrs. Axy, when excited, could talk enough, in the space of ninety minutes, to fill a large octavo volume of fine print. Neither do I think it worth the while to set forth the earnest dialogue which took place, when, on his way home, the Colonel met Joab, returning in a fit of unusual and extreme dejection from his weekly courting visit. Let it suffice to say, that, at parting, the uncle shook the nephew by the hand with great vigor, and assured him, with many vehement asseverations, that he, the Colonel himself, would do the rest of the courting, and would do it in a hurry, too.

Lucy was in her mother's bedroom, relating, with angry vivacity, a narration of the open rupture which had that evening been the final result of Joab's renewed and persistent allusions to the subject of the wedding. She had just finished the burden of her story, and was pro-

ceeding, according to the custom of young ladies in the like circumstances, to gratify her pique and vexation, by coupling sundry disparaging epithets, denoting the absent Joab, with divers scornful and contumelious adjectives, when she heard her father's step at the door. A moment afterwards he entered the room. A single glance at his flushed and angry face told the two women that the crisis had at length arrived. Mrs. Manners, however, continued knitting busily, but her keen, gray eyes stealthily followed the motions of her husband, as, without saying a word, he pulled off his boots with a jerk, and drew up his arm-chair to the fire, with an angry hitch. Lucy lit her candle, and was going to slip out of the room, but a stern, abrupt command from her father's lips, stayed her trembling steps. She put down her light upon the table, and stood waiting with a throbbing heart for the next word. It was not long delayed, for the Colonel was full of his subject, and the account which he had just received from Joab, of the disdainful dismissal that Lucy had given his suit, artfully embellished with false or garbled reports of the rea-

sons therefor by her assigned, and of her unfilial declarations of independence, had exasperated him to a degree altogether unprecedented.

"So, Miss Lucy," said he, turning towards her, "you don't think the husband I've chosen for you is good enough, eh? Think you know better'n your old father, do you? Mean to suit yourself, whether your father, that gave you a bein', likes it or not, hey? Come, let's hear some of your brave speeches now. Jest talk as promp' to me as you did to Joab. Speak up," continued the Colonel, waxing warmer as he went on; "don't stand there a sulkin', you little hussy! You expect to jilt Joab, don't ye?"

"I don't love him, papa," replied poor Lucy, with a quivering lip and imploring look at her mother's calm face.

The Colonel, with an effort, stifled a strong inclination to open profanity, and then continued in a hightened, sneering tone. "Don't love him, eh? He aint so smart and slick as them 'are dandyfied clarks and stoodents to Har'ford, mebby? Don't use pomatum, praps. Don't smell enough like a skunk to suit ye, eh?

sich a fine stylish lady as you've got to be, I expect you're ashamed of your country relations—old clod-hopper of a father, and all. By jingo! I was a dumb fool, I'm afraid, as your aunt Axy says, to let you go to that infernal school. I might ha' known you'd get your idees raised too high, and your foolish little head turned arter some smoothily-spoken fop or other."

Lucy's eye began to kindle, for she was not one of your spiritless damsels, whose only reply to abuse is a flood of tears. She was about to retort in a very undutiful tone and manner, but a quick glance of reproof and warning from her mother checked the untoward impulse, before it had matured into action.

"Husband," began Mrs. Manners, "let me say a word."

"Well, say it," replied the Colonel, who entertained so profound a respect for his wife, that even when the most angry and out of temper, he never ventured to speak to her with harshness.

"I wish," continued Mrs. Manners, pausing in her knitting; "I wish that you'd let Lucy

have a little more time. She's young yet, a mere girl, and at present it seems don't fancy Joab for a husband, but——"

Here the good lady hesitated, and began to knit again; and her husband, after waiting decorously for her awhile, resumed his remarks.

"Betsey," said he, "I must say I never heerd you talk so kind o' foolish, and little to the purpose in my life. I know you're more'n half agin this match, and I'm sorry enough you be, for my heart is set on it, my promise is given, and my mind's made up. As for waitin', you know and I know, 'taint no use. She's as old as you was when we was married, and you've allus made a good wife. The fact is, delays is dangerous, and the gal won't be no more willin' a year from this time than she is now. I'll leave it to her. Come now, Lucy, answer, honor bright, would you be?"

"Speak the truth, Lucy," said her mother.

"No, sir," replied Lucy, stoutly.

"There," cried the Colonel; "what did I tell ye? Now the fact is," he continued, "the fact is just this, and there is no gettin' round it.

This weddin' has got to take place next Thanksgivin' night, and 'twont be a year afore you'll both own I was right. Lucy 'll be all reconciled, and wouldn't be onmarried for a fortin', and the old homestead here will be goin' to be inherited by my father's grand-children; jest as he told me on his death-bed he wanted to have it. I've gin up expectin' that it can go in the name, but it 'll go in the blood, and my grand-child will be a Manners, both on his father's and mother's side, and that will kind o' make up for his not havin' the name. Ef Lucy had jest been a boy now, so that it could ha' been kep in the name, I shouldn't ha' been strenoous, and I wouldn't ha' undertook to have interfered with her choosin' sich a husband—no—I mean wife—as she'd took a fancy for; if so be she'd ha' chosen a decent young feller; though, even in that case, I should ha' rather she'd ha' had Joab; well—no—but—well—I declare," added the Colonel, after a brief pause, during which he had diligently rubbed his forehead; "I get it out sort o' confused; but my meanin' 's plain. I can state the upshot o' the matter middlin'

quick," he continued, his irritation manifestly hightened by his recent failure to express his ideas with distinctness; "and that's this. You and your cousin Joab are to be married next Thanksgivin' night; you understand that, don't ye, Miss Lucy?"

"Yes, sir," faltered Lucy.

"And you're agoin' to mind, aint ye, say?"

"No, sir," replied Lucy, with a sudden boldness.

"Heavens and airth! what do ye mean?" cried the Colonel, starting from his chair in wrath and surprise. "Jest look a here, Miss ——"

"Husband," began Mrs. Manners.

"I tell ye, Betsey," said the Colonel, striving to lower his voice to a respectful key while speaking to his wife; "I tell ye, now, don't interfere. The child is mine as well as yourn, and I'm a dealin' with her now. 'Taint fair, nor proper, nor best for you to meddle, and you musn't. When you begin fust you shall have the floor, as they say to Gin'ral Court: but now it's my turn, and I raly do wish you'd wait till it's fairly yourn."

"Only don't be rash," pleaded the mother.

"I ain't agoin' to be," resumed the Colonel. Nevertheless, no sooner had he turned once more towards the fair rebel, who, frightened but resolute, stood shrinking and cowering before her father's fiery glance, yet meeting it with a steady, defiant look, than his voice again rose to an angry pitch.

"Do you mean to tell me," he cried, "that you're agoin' to refuse to obey your father—you—you—ain't you agoin' to marry Joab when I bid you to?"

"No, sir," replied Lucy, in a low but determined tone, "I don't love him, and I won't marry anybody I don't love."

"But you'll larn to love him," said her father, trying hard to keep his temper within safe bounds, and deigning to argue the case with his refractory daughter.

"I hope not," cried Lucy, passionately, for she was thoroughly roused. "Oh! I hope not. It would be dreadful to have a heart capable of loving such a creature!"

"By ——!" cried the Colonel, swearing outright for the first time in twenty years.

"There!" he added quite aghast at the profanity. "Do you hear that? You've made your father swear, you wicked child. The Lord forgive me! and I'm a church-member and a Justice of the Peace! But it shan't be for nothin', I tell ye! I won't take the Lord's name altogether in vain, for I do solemnly swear——"

"Oh! hush, my dear husband!" cried Mrs. Manners, pale with emotion and alarm. But her husband enjoined silence by an imperious gesture. "I do solemnly swear," he continued, holding up his right hand, "that unless you marry with my consent—unless you marry your cousin, in this house, on next Thanksgivin' night, in my presence, I will disown you for a disobedient daughter, and cut you off with a shillin' in my will—so help me God!"

While the angry old man was uttering his oath, his wife sat with her eyes fixed upon his face, her breath restrained, her lips apart, a very statue of anxious attention; while Lucy stood before him, pale, erect, and rigid; and no sooner had he ceased speaking, and her

mother had, with a long breath, fallen back in her chair, than she began with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, "And now hear me!" she cried; "I swear, that I will marry no one else than—"

"Lucy! Lucy!" cried her mother; "stop, I command you! Hush! hush!" she repeated, as the excited girl, after hesitating for an instant, attempted to resume her speech, "sit down!" Lucy obeyed, and leaning her head against the side of the bed, began to sob convulsively. Her mother stooped over her and whispered in her ear. Meanwhile the Colonel, recovering somewhat from the exaltation of his wrath, began both to look and feel a little foolish and ashamed, albeit he strove hard to keep his anger hot.

"Husband," at last said Mrs. Manners, still keeping Lucy's hand in hers, "you've taken a very solemn oath."

"I know it," replied the Colonel, doggedly. "I don't need to be told on't, Betsey. I've taken an oath, and what's more, I mean to keep it."

"I don't doubt it a bit," continued his wife,

with an accent of reproach that was by no means lost on her husband. "I know you too well to doubt it."

"You may be sure on't," said the Colonel; "and so may Lucy."

"An oath so solemn should be recorded," resumed Mrs. Manners. "I remembe r your very words; for I took care to notice what you said. I'll write 'em out, and you shall put your name to 'em."

"Poh, psha!" said the Colonel, with a sheepish, sullen air; "what's the use of all that ceremony?"

"Because," said his wife, "I intend that Lucy shall obey the conditions of it to the very letter. The penalty is pretty severe if she fails; nothing short of being disowned and disinherited."

At this point Lucy's sobs filled her father's heart with anguish. The tears came into his eyes. "All she's got to do is just to obey me, and that's her dooty, you'll own yourself," said he, with a deprecatory manner.

"Of course, and I intend she shall; but she ought to have the command, enforced as it is

with a penalty, and that by an oath, fairly written out. Come, you're not afraid to put in writing what you've uttered with your tongue."

"Write it out, then," cried the Colonel; whereupon his wife, after another whisper to Lucy, rose, went to the desk, took a pen and wrote a few words upon a sheet of paper, which she brought to her husband on a book. "There; read it," said she; "they are your very words."

"Um—m—m—, yes," said the Colonel, "yes; that's what I said, and what I mean to stick to."

"Sign it, then," said his wife, handing the pen to him.

The Colonel took the quill, and slowly subscribed his name. He was not a dexterous penman; the book made but an unhandy desk; and he wrote without his spectacles.

Meanwhile his wife stood looking over his shoulder, with a shrewd smile upon her lips, and her gray eyes twinkling. Lucy, with her face buried in the bed-clothes, continued at intervals to sob faintly.

"There," said the Colonel, returning the pen to his wife, but carefully avoiding at the same time to meet her glance.

"Now," said Mrs. Manners, after she had folded up the paper, and put it carefully away in a drawer of the desk, "now, there's your oath in black and white, so that some future day, if necessary, we may know just what it calls for. On my part, I intend to do all that I can to make Lucy perform what is therein required of her to the very letter."

"If she will," said the Colonel, glancing towards the bed, "there aint nothin' I won't do for her."

"I want you to promise, then," said his wife, "that if she conforms to what was written on that paper, as I shall try to make her, you'll forgive her for what's happened to-night; and though you may yourself be sorry for having compelled her to marry her cousin, you'll not blame her for her strict observance."

"Promise! of course I do," cried the Colonel.

"Come, then," said Mrs. Manners. "Lucy, kiss your father; bid each other good night,

and then I'll go up to bed with you, my child."

Poor little Lucy lifted her head from the bedside, with her hair falling over her face, and came tottering towards her father, with a white knuckle in each eye. The old gentleman held out his arms, and Lucy put hers about his neck. He kissed her wet cheek, and smoothed down her disordered curls. "Love will come with the babies, Sissie," said he; whereat Lucy burst out crying again, and was led off up stairs to her own chamber by her mother, sobbing with redoubled vehemence.

"By George!" said the Colonel, talking to himself, after the women had got out of hearing. "By George!" said he, blowing his nose, and nodding his head in a positive manner; "there's nothin' like bein' firm and decided when you've got women to deal with. I vow I didn't expect, one spell, that Lucy would ha' gi'n up so quick and easy; for she's gritty as buckwheat bran when she gets her Ebenezer up; and as for her mother, raally I was afeared she'd take up on her side agin me, and there'd be the Old Nick to pay. I'm actilly tempted

to tell Axy how it came out arter I put my foot down, just to shut her mouth when she says that Betsey leads me by the nose, and ollers makes me do jest as she wants to have me. I'm the head of my own family yet, I guess."

CHAPTER VIII.

If I were to attempt a relation of all that happened between this memorable Sunday night and the next Thanksgiving-day, my story, which is, I fear, already too long, would be extended, by the recital, far beyond all reasonable limits. Albeit I cherish a modest hope that, if I were to describe some of the events which took place in this interval, a few, at least, of my fair readers would be thereby greatly entertained. For instance, there is the journey to Hartford, which was performed in the covered spring-wagon by Lucy and her mother, John Dashleigh himself driving the span of five-year-old black colts; the main purpose of which was the buying of Lucy's wedding dress and other kindred matters. In the space of three days, the ladies expended the sum of two hundred dollars, which had been given to Lucy by her fond father, in the form of a roll of crisp, rustling, old Hartford bank-bills; besides a smaller sum that Mrs. Manners

had on hand in her own private purse. John Dashleigh, also, ordered a handsome suit of clothes, which the tailor promised should be finished, and sent out in a parcel to Walbury, by the post-rider, in time for the wedding; stipulating, furthermore, that every garment should fit like a glove. He also went to a goldsmith's and bought a plain gold ring; which, as it was of a very small size, could not have been for his own hand, and, therefore, might have been intended as a present for little Ellen. I might relate how John, each afternoon during the sojourn in Hartford, used to frequent a certain street-corner, and walk back and forth, behaving so strangely, that the people living in the houses near by at last fell into various mistakes with respect to his character, motives, and intentions; some suspecting him of lunacy, while the majority inclined to the belief that he was a burglar, reconnoitering for a professional midnight enterprise. I could tell how Lucy visited her former schoolmates at the Misses Primber's seminary; how, in a short time, they all knew that she was to be married on Thanksgiving night; and how, in

consequence, she was stared at by some of the younger girls, who strove to realize, as they gazed, that the person before them was so very soon to become a bride, and to fancy how they themselves would feel when placed in similarly interesting circumstances. I might also relate, (for authors know everything,) the very private and confidential conversation that Lucy held with the young lady, of whom honorable mention has heretofore been made, to wit, her quondam bedfellow; but as the young lady herself, with a degree of discretion and reticence which was, under the circumstances, most truly marvelous, did not betray the secrets at that interview confided to her keeping, though sorely tempted so to do, I should be ashamed not to imitate so worthy an example. Besides, I have another reason for being close-mouthed, which the reader may presently discover for himself.

Equally pleasant, I trust, would it be to hear of the other preparations for the wedding that were constantly going on at Walbury, until the house seemed turned topsy-turvy, and there was not a room, from cellar to garret, in

which there was not something to put one in mind of the approaching event. In one chamber you would find a quilting-frame, nearly filling the space, surrounded by a hollow square of women and girls, each busily plying needle and scissors. In another, a group of seamstresses were perpetually employed in the manufacture of sheets, table-cloths, pillow-cases and all sorts of household linen. The Colonel found himself an intruder even in his own bedroom, where his wife and daughter had fallen into the habit of holding frequent consultations with a fashionably-attired mantua-maker—whom they had fetched home with them on the back seat of the spring-wagon, all the way from Hartford—over the silks, laces, gauzes and ribbons, with which the bed and sofa were continually bestrewn. He could scarcely even open the door of this apartment without hearing a little scream from Lucy, who would be discovered standing bare-armed in the middle of the floor, in her petticoat and stays, with Mrs. Manners and the dressy mantua-maker busily engaged in pinning, basting, and puckering curiously shaped pieces of silk and satin

about her bosom and waist, and little Ellen standing by, holding a pincussion or a work-basket. The two elder ladies would echo Lucy's outcry; the modish and modest mantua-maker would blush and giggle, and the Colonel would then hastily effect a retreat, followed by a volley of reproaches and warnings not to offend in like manner again. As for Lucy's own chamber, it was put under a rigorous taboo, so that every woman and girl in the household, who did not enjoy the privilege of entrance, was devoured by curiosity, and the whole feminine population of Walbury was agitated by rumors of what was contained in this most sacred place. At last, in the course of events, the bustle of preparation invaded and overran the kitchen. Then might have been seen the mistress of the mansion and her trusty lieutenant, the Widow Dashleigh, standing with bare arms and floury faces, taking counsel together, comparing notes with respect to the mysterious rites and ceremonies to be observed in the compounding of certain kinds of cake, diligently studying together greasy manuscript recipes, and anon giving forth their orders to

the corps of subordinates, which consisted—besides an irregular volunteer force—of Susan Peet, and Daphne, or Aunt Daffy, as she was usually called, an ancient negress, the well-beloved consort of old Tite: whose reputation as a most skillful cook had extended far beyond the circumvallating hills which formed the limit of her native Niptuck valley, and spread even into the most remote corners of Windham county.

For three days before Thanksgiving, the cavernous depths of the capacious oven were in a constant glow. The broad kitchen dressers were covered with rows of pies and loaves of cake, some waiting their turn at the oven, and others, which, having undergone the fiery trial, had been placed there to cool and suffer inspection, before being borne away to the buttery and store-room. The thumping of rolling-pins, the din of pestles pounding aromatic herbs and pungent spices in ringing mortars, the grating of nutmegs and loaf sugar, the bubbling of simmering sauces and sweetmeats, and the luscious sound of eggs beaten to a foam in china bowls, mingled with the ex-

piring cries of chickens and turkeys, suffering the pains of decapitation, at the wood-pile in the back door-yard.

And, if it were not for the sufficient reasons hereinbefore set forth, I might go on to relate the doings of the expectant bridegroom, and of his worthy parents, during this intervening time. Joab experienced much relief at having the annoyance and trouble of courting taken off his hands by the Colonel; and instead of wasting his time, as some foolish lovers would have done, in running up to hinder Lucy in her preparations, as often as he could invent excuses for it, he restricted his visits, as hitherto, to Sunday evening calls of exemplary brevity. His week-day leisure he employed chiefly in watching the workmen who were busy about repairing the house, in which it had been arranged by the elders the new married couple should commence the world upon their own account. It was a large, gloomy, old-fashioned mansion, which had lately fallen into the Deacon's possession by the foreclosure of a mortgage; and there was a dismal air of decay and

dilapidation about it, which might have been the reason why Lucy, of late, could never pass by it without a shudder. In many places the paint was worn quite through at the edges of clapboards and other exposed points; the spouts and gutters were bent awry, and choked with leaves and rubbish; one of the chimney-tops had been blown off in a gale, and the bricks and mortar were scattered abroad on the mossy roof; the spiders had spun great cob-webs on the closed window-blinds; and there was a hornets' nest of immense size that covered half the fan-light. The front wicket was unhinged and broken, and a gravel walk extended from it to the door-steps, between borders of mildewed box and a double row of scraggy poplars. But this house stood conveniently near Deacon Sweeny's own dwelling and store; there was a traditional savor of gentility and rank still lurking in its damp and musty apartments, because its owners and residents for generations, until of late, had been a family of wealth and condition; and Mrs. Axy averred, that, with a few dollars laid out

upon it in the way of general repairs, papering, and painting, it would be fit for a king and queen to live in.

Joab, also, had ordered a wedding suit of the very tailor who had been employed to make John's new raiment; and the two bundles were brought out together in the post-rider's wagon, and duly delivered by that functionary to their respective proprietors. Even the Deacon, at the instigation of his wife, cut off, with a sigh of regret, a scant pattern from a piece of cheap black broadcloth; from which, after much profound calculation, the village tailoress ingeniously contrived to construct a coat; for which service she stipulated in advance to take store pay. This garment, which was a master-piece of skill in the way of elaborate piecing, the Deacon used to wear on Sundays only, until some ten years afterwards he went to meeting for the last time. Mrs. Axy borrowed, for a day, the dressy mantua-maker from Hartford, of her sister-in-law, and had fitted to her spare form a gown of black silk, which was so stiff that it would almost stand alone.

The expenses which were occasioned by these

and other preparations for the wedding, caused the good Deacon several grievous twinges, the violence of which was, however, a good deal allayed by his observing that the young women of the village, being moved thereto by the prospect of an invitation to the wedding party, increased their custom at his counter to an unusual extent. Indeed, the mere profits on the goods purchased by Mrs. Manners and her messengers alone, he found, after a careful reckoning, would more than reimburse the cost of all the new wedding garments of his wife and himself.

Meanwhile, Colonel Manners found frequent occasion for rejoicing and self-gratulation, on account of the firmness and decision which had characterized his conduct on the Sunday night after the reading of the governor's proclamation. The salutary effect of his resolute behavior, surpassed even his own hopes. He had, indeed, expected obedience; but, at the best, obedience rendered not without occasional tears, repinings and fits of sullen reluctance; whereas, it came to pass that, since the time Lucy had been led to her own chamber weeping and sob

bing by her mother, he had never seen her when she seemed to be at all unhappy or dispirited. To be sure, once or twice, he caught her looking at him with a strange, apprehensive expression, which he was at a loss to interpret. "The child's afeard of me, poor thing," thought he, with a pang, "I was a leetle too vi'lent, p'raps. Well, never mind; ef she lives she'll find, I guess, that I don't love her any less than her mother; only for now, I reckon, it's best to keep along pretty middlin' stiff. Ef I hadn't ha' ben considerable perpendic'lar she'd ha' never gi'n in so dosyle."

But though my heroine, who is going to be married so soon, deserves, and must of course receive, the greater share of my attention, I cannot find it in my heart to forget and neglect wholly my poor hero, John Dashleigh. During this interval, he grew more rapidly than ever in the good graces of his uncle, who could not fail to observe how strenuously his head-man exerted himself to win his approbation. "A faithfuler cretur," said the Colonel to his wife, the night before Thanksgiving, as the pair were getting ready for bed; "a faithfuler cre-

tur don't live on the footstool. He's wuth any two men, on a farm, I ever see; and that's saying a good deal, for Andrew was a fust-rate of a hand. Next year, by jingo, I'll give him a chance that'll help him to have a farm of his own, long enough before I shall want to spare him. Ef anything, I do believe he tries too hard to suit me, and actilly, sometimes, from the boy's looks, I consait he's kind o' feard of me."

"I expect," added the Colonel, after a fit of musing, "I expect he feels under obligation to me, for having helped his father in years gone by; and it ain't, to be sure, no bad trait in him; but I declare, actilly, I do hate to have anybody round a-feeling too grateful. It makes a fellow feel sort o' choky and uncomfortable. And there ain't no need of his thinkin' he owes me anything for what's past and gone, for by gracious! wasn't John Dashleigh my brother-in-law before he was ever this John's father? and hadn't I a right to help him keep out of jail, on my own account?"

As the good Colonel concluded this solilo-

quy, and was again gazing fixedly at the glowing coals in the fire-place, wherein he saw, in fancy, the features of the dead Sheriff Dashleigh, he was suddenly alarmed and amazed by having his wife come to him in her night-cap and night-gown, throw her arms about his neck, and burst into a fit of passionate weeping.

"Good Gracious! Betsey!" he cried, as soon as he could find a voice—"why—what on airth—do shet up a minit and tell me what's the matter! Have ye heerd of anybody's bein' dead?"

"N-no," cried Mrs. Manners between her sobs, "b-b-but—"

"Well, there! ef I ever, now!" said the Colonel, as this effort at explanation resulted in more incoherent utterances and renewed sobs. He was, withal, somewhat incommoded by the strictness of the embrace, in which his wife still continued to hold him. A good-natured man, like Colonel Manners, will, however, suffer an inconvenience of this nature, to the verge of endurance, without complaint. "Can't ye kind o' tell me what's the

matter, Betsy?" said he at last, when the first violence of the sobbing began to subside.

"You are the b-best husband in the world," cried the lady, "too—too—g-good for me!"

"Well, well; sposin' I be," rejoined the Colonel, "that ain't nothing to cry for, sartinly. Howsever, I ain't no sich a thing, and if I was I ort to be; for raly, Betsy, you're about as good a wife as a man ever had!"

"You'll forgive me, won't you?" persisted his wife; "say you will!"

"Forgive you!" repeated the Colonel, "why ef I've got anything to forgive, to be sure I will, with all my heart; but I ain't got nothin'. There, set upon my knee, like old times you know—there—sweetheart, there," he continued soothingly, as he put his arm about her waist, and kissed her fondly. "You see, you've worked so hard a gettin' ready for the weddin', you've got all tuckered out and narvousy."

"Husband," cried Mrs. Manners, suddenly, "I want you to promise me one thing—that whatever may happen, no matter how much cause you may think you have to be angry with me, you won't say a harsh or unkind

word to me, in a haste. You never have yet," she continued, beginning to cry afresh, "in all our living together, you never have yet: and if you ever should, it would break my heart; for if either of us should be taken away, I want to have it to—s-say—" and here the good lady fairly broke down, and wept amain.

"Don't now—don't—don't—oh! don't now!" exhorted the Colonel.

"P-promise me," sobbed his wife, "you won't, will you."

"Why o' course not," cried the Colonel, with great emphasis, in order to conceal a sympathetic quavering that began to infect his own voice, "taint likely—ahem—arter we've lived together nigh on to twenty-one year, that I'm goin' to begin to abuse you for the fust time."

"For one great reason for my doing as I have and shall," continued Mrs. Manners, "is a-thinking of how much happier you'd be for it, if I should die and leave you, than——"

"Why! Betsey!" cried the Colonel, sorely wounded by this speech, "what do you mean by I'd be happier if you should die?—raly that's unkind."

"No, no," said his wife; "I don't mean that; I mean—, but I can't tell you what;—to-morrow night I'll tell you—or some time; I—I'm sort of addled to-night, I do believe," she continued, trying to smile.

"Well, well; I shouldn't wonder;—you're so tired," said the Colonel, kindly; "so let's go to bed and get a good night's rest, for to-morrow 'll be a busy day."

"Pretty soon," replied his wife, leaning her head against his shoulder.

"Actilly," said the Colonel, after a pause, as he caught a glimpse of himself and his wife over her shoulder, in the looking-glass; "anybody to see us would calkilate we was a young couple a sparkin' on't instead of old married folks with a darter just a-goin' to be married herself."

Presently Mrs. Manners kissed her husband, and, jumping off from his knee, ran and got into bed, whither the Colonel soon followed her. They both lay for a long time wide awake, each feigning to be asleep, and each deceived by the other's artifice; the husband wondering greatly what could have been the cause of his

wife's recent emotion and singular conduct, and feeling a good deal disturbed and uneasy lest it might have been a presentiment of speedy death. "I've heerd of sich forewarnins," thought he, "but I hope that this ain't one of 'em."

At last his wife, raising herself on her elbow, leaned over and kissed him softly two or three times. The Colonel affected to be unconscious of these caresses, and kept his eyes closed; though, after his wife had lain down again, there came such a moisture into them that he was obliged to wipe them slyly with a corner of the sheet. "I shouldn't want to live a minute, ef she should be taken away," thought he. "Speak hash to her! I'd as soon think o' puttin' my own eyes out."

But, good man, like honest Peter of old, he little knew of the sore temptation that was so soon to beset him.

CHAPTER IX.

When Lucy awoke on the morning of Thanksgiving Day, her heart gave a bound in her bosom, with the shock of asudden consciousness that her wedding day had dawned at last. She dreaded to rise and begin the day in which such great events and momentous changes were to happen. So, as it was yet early in the morning, she lay still in bed for awhile, striving to realize that it was actually, veritably true, that she, she herself, Lucy Manners, whom she remembered but a little while ago waking in the same chamber, and in the very same little white bed, thinking how to contrive a dress for a doll, or to arrange a plan for spending a holiday, that was now grown to be a woman, so very soon to become a wife.

It is a great pity, that, because there are naughty-minded people in the world—some of whom, by-the-by, would be the very first to cry out fie—it has been made necessary to

prescribe certain rules of conventional decorum, which forbid me to tell what a charming object was our dear Lucy, as she lay that morning in her virgin bed for the last time, while her brain was busy with these and similar thoughts and reminiscences, and her heart, filled with an emotion of mingled hope, fear, and anxiety, was fluttering in her white bosom like a frightened bird in a cage. If, with an author's license, I could open the door of Lucy's chamber, and permit you only, my pure-minded reader, to peep in and behold the unsullied maiden who was its tenant, and to share her innocent thoughts and fancies, I should be heartily glad to accord to you the privilege; but, I know full well that some prying, prudish old maid or other would be sure to stand behind you on tip-toe, looking over your shoulder, and then go about tattling and shaking her head for a month afterwards. Or, still worse, some corrupt debauchee or wicked rake would steal the opportunity to gaze, with gloating eyes, upon a scene too holy to be polluted by his evil glance. I will

not suffer such a risk, and you, my gracious reader, will smile a pardon.

But there is no reason why, if anybody would like to know how Joab was employed on the morning of the day fixed for his wedding, this curiosity should not be gratified. Like Lucy, her expectant husband woke early, and, as was not usual with him, he, too, lay awhile before getting up; for, the governor's proclamation having forbidden all "vain recreation, business, and servile labor," upon this secular Sabbath, it was not necessary to open and sweep out the store before breakfast, according to the usual week-day custom. The reflection which, of all others, gave Joab the greatest pleasure, was, that, before the dawn of another day, he would be the real heir apparent to all the wealth of his rich uncle, the Colonel. "He ain't wuth less than a cool fifty thousand," thought Joab. "Half on't, certain, in money at interest and bank stock, and other personal property; two-thirds of which will be mine, my own, jist as soon as the estate is settled and distributed; and if the old woman

dies, I have the whole. The use of the real estate, except the widow's third, will be mine, too, by law; and I'd like to see that little pert of a Lucy refuse, after the old Colonel is out of the way, to sign any deed I ask her to, if I please to take measures to get it all into my own hands. I'll pay her for her high airs as soon as Uncle Starr drops off, and her stuck-up mother, too. By gosh!" said Joab aloud, who hadn't the manliness to swear outright, even when alone; "by gosh! I'm willin' the old fool should live a widow a spell, and have her thirds, ef she wouldn't spend the principal, jest while I pay her off for the spite she allus had agin me."

As Joab concluded this amiable soliloquy, he heard his mother's voice calling out to him at the foot of the stairs. "Come, my son," cried the old lady, who was in high spirits, "get up and come down right away. You wont have me to call you to-morrow morning, Joby." So Joab, thrusting first one long, lean, spindling leg from underneath the coverlet, and then its fellow, gave a yawn and a

stretch, and got up. "There ain't no need o' fixin' up any till after breakfast," said he; and, having put on his pantaloons and stockings, he went to the window. It was a bright, sunshiny morning, and the quiet village street was as still as Sunday. There were two or three red-nosed idlers grouped about the door of the tavern, coughing and spitting after taking their morning drams, while their lean curs, too low-spirited for play, were moodily exchanging growling salutations under the elm tree in front, bristling their manes and scratching the dried herbage with their hind paws. Except these no living thing appeared abroad. Joab turned from the window, finished dressing himself, hurried down to the back stoop, where, after filling an iron skillet with a pint of rain water from a hogshead at the corner, he laved his face and hands; finishing his morning toilet by the use of one of a pair of penny wooden combs, which he was accustomed to carry in his trowsers pocket. Then he went in with a good appetite to a breakfast which, as it was Thanksgiving morning, was

rather more toothsome than the victuals that usually were spread upon the Deacon's frugal table.

In the meanwhile, John Dashleigh, rising betimes, had seen to the feeding and milking of his herd of cows; had, with his own hands, groomed and watered his span of black colts, and had then gone in to breakfast at the Colonel's table; for Mrs. Dashleigh, during the hurry of this busy Thanksgiving week, was too useful a person to be spared from the great house; and so John, of late, had taken all his meals there. I wonder that the Colonel did not notice how both John and Lucy blushed when they met each other that morning. As for Lucy she was as rosy as the brilliant clouds that streaked the orient sky beyond the hills, over whose tops the sun had just risen. It was lucky for them that the unsuspecting Colonel was not an astute interpreter of the signs of love; for so plainly did John's honest face reveal the secret of his heart, whenever he looked towards Lucy, that Mrs. Manners was in a fever of anxiety lest her husband should detect it; and, as soon as

breakfast was over, she took her nephew apart and administered a wholesome lesson of reproof and caution. "Get ready and go to meeting, out of the way, this forenoon," said she, "and at dinner-time, do for the land's sake, just eat your victuals and look at the pictures on your plate, or anything, but don't keep staring at Lucy so. Your uncle will suspect something, and actually, John, it scares me to see you look so as if you wanted to eat her up. Ah! John, John; I thought you were a modest, bashful boy; but, after all, you've got more of your poor father about you than his looks, I'm afraid."

And now, it being the eleventh hour of the morning, throughout the length and breadth of the Niptuck valley, throughout the county of Windham withal, nay, throughout the whole extent of the State of Connecticut, was heard the merry sound of ringing bells; while, borne upward with the wreaths of smoke from every fuming kitchen chimney-top, rose fragrant steams and exhalations, so that everywhere the frosty air was full of chiming melodies, and the delicious odors of the oven and the spit. The

sturdy freemen of the commonwealth, banished from their firesides by their busy housewives, assembled at the meeting-houses; while the good dames themselves remained at home, absorbed in culinary cares. Even Mrs. Sweeny's accustomed place in her pew was that morning vacant; and, indeed, the Deacon, her husband, although he started in good time, did not arrive at the door of the sanctuary until the benediction had been pronounced by Parson Graves, and the younger portion of his impatient and hungry congregation had begun to effect their tumultuous escape.

It happened that the Deacon, on his way to meeting, while passing the tavern, had been accosted by the landlord; who, standing at the bar-room door and winking with elaborate slyness, had informed him that one Apollos Swift was in the house, warming himself at the back-parlor fire, and waiting to see Deacon Sweeny. "I've ben a watchin' for ye, Deacon," said the landlord, "for he's in a desput fret, and ye must come in and see him, ef it's ony for a minute. Tell ye, he's purty hard up, I guess!"

At this intelligence, the withered old muscle

in Deacon Sweeny's bosom gave a flutter against his ribs, and his little red eyes emitted a transient, twinkling gleam of satisfaction. Apollos Swift was a spendthrift jockey farmer, residing in the neighboring county town, whose necessities had often compelled him, from time to time, to borrow money from the Deacon; and, in fact, whose present errand in Walbury was to effect still another loan, and to secure its repayment by still another mortgage upon his homestead farm, already pledged to Deacon Sweeny for nearly half its worth. The Deacon had, for some time, been expecting this final application; and, indeed, had put aside a sufficient sum of money wherewith to meet it. "Another five hundred," thought he, as he counted over the roll of bills, and laid it away in a snug pigeon hole of his desk, "another five hundred and Swift 'll be in tu deep ever tu git out again. Let the interest run a spell, and then, some time, when times are purty tight, jest foreclose, and the fust anybody knows, I'll have a farm in Windham that won't ha' cost me but a little more'n half what I can git for't." So, though the bell had already begun to toll,

the Deacon turned aside, and followed the landlord into the bar-room. "I shall jest have to go in I s'pose," said he to the publican, "and tell the feller I can't do no business to-day, though, to be sure, arter all, 'tain't as ef 'twas Sunday exactly; and talking over business, when you don't do none, ain't neither servile labor, nor vain recreation."

"Oh! of course 'tain't!" said the landlord, opening the door to the back-parlor, whereby Mr. Apollos Swift was discovered, with his feet cocked upon the top of the fire-frame, and with his head thrown back, in the act of draining the last dregs of a monstrous mug of flip. When, more than an hour afterwards, the back-parlor door was again opened, and Deacon Sweeny came forth to resume his walk towards the meeting-house, he had promised Apollos Swift to lend him, upon the morrow, another five hundred dollars, and had furthermore stipulated and agreed to sell, and convey to him, by proper and legal conveyances and assurances in the law, for the consideration of fifty dollars, cash, to be paid in hand, two roods of land; the same being six building lots, each

duly numbered, fronting upon Main street, in the city of Sweenopolis, which at that time, as at the present writing, consisted of an extensive ledge of rocks, pleasantly situated upon the western slope of the Alleghany Mountains, in the ancient commonwealth of Virginia, distant, at least, twenty miles from any dwelling of civilized man, and densely populated by an active, thriving population of ten thousand rattlesnakes. The tract of five hundred acres, upon which the city of Sweenopolis was laid out, the Deacon had, at first, taken in payment of a bad debt. Nevertheless, it had proved to be a most valuable piece of property. He procured the school-master to make a plan of the city, and after that few people borrowed money of Deacon Sweeny, who were not, at the same time, persuaded to invest a small portion of the loan in the purchase of a building lot. An old saddle, that before that time always lay under the desk, and which had been sold over and over, five hundred times, at all sorts of prices, was removed, a worthless piece of lumber, to the garret, and was never sold again. But the gossips said, that ten years

later, when Apollos Swift finally gave up the ghost, a drunken pauper in Windham poor-house, he was the owner in fee simple of two acres of land, which lay in the very heart of the city of Sweenopolis, adjoining the public square.

Deacon Sweeny and Mr. Swift had been so very busy arranging the terms and conditions of these several inchoate contracts, that the time had slipped by unheeded. Besides, Parson Graves, with the prospect before him of a Thanksgiving dinner, was not so lengthy in prayer and sermon as of a Sunday. When, therefore, the Deacon, after a hasty walk, arrived in sight of the meeting-house, and beheld the people thronging out from the porch, he was struck dumb with amazement and terror—as well he might have been, indeed, for a reason which the reader will presently discover. His neighbors eyed his disordered looks with wonder; and some, as they met him, turned to gaze; while others, speaking, bade him good morning. But he, answering either not at all, or with the briefest form of salutation, pressed forward towards the meeting-house door with-

out stopping, until he came to the very step-stone whereon stood Parson Graves, who had just put on his cocked hat as he came forth. "Parson Graves!" gasped the Deacon, who was almost breathless with disquiet and haste, "can't ye jest call a few of the people back, and open the meetin' agin, for jest a single minute?"

"For what reason, I pray to know, Deacon Sweeny?" inquired the Parson, in great surprise at this singular request.

"Jest call 'em back!" cried the Deacon, imploringly—"or stay; I will—hello there!—Cap'n Brown, I say—Leftenant Jones and a lot on ye—here—hello!—come back!"

"Deacon Sweeny," said Parson Graves, "pray cease this unseemly outcry. It is too late to recall the congregation, who have been dismissed to their homes."

"Oh, dear!" cried the Deacon, giving way to despair, while a few of his wondering neighbors, attracted by his shouts, returned and gathered about him, making eager inquiries concerning the cause of his distress. "Oh, dear! dear! here I've got in my pocket my son

Joab's publishment, which ort tu have been read from the pulpit this mornin', and the weddin's set for to-night!"

"Creation!" whispered Captain Brown to Lieutenant Jones; "I guess the Deacon's wife 'll be on eend when she larns how 'tis."

"And the Colonel!" replied the Captain; "wont he rare, though, when he hears on't?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" said Parson Graves, with lively sympathy; "what a pity! How came it to pass, Deacon, that you were not at meeting in season to hand me the document, so that it might have been read from the desk, according to law and the custom in such cases?"

"There's John Dashleigh!" cried a bystander; "jest holler and call him back, and send for the Colonel. He'll know what to do, if anybody doos."

"Truly a very sensible and timely suggestion," said the Parson, who, like everybody else in the parish, had a great opinion of Colonel Manners' wisdom. "Call out to the young man to return hither—some one who has the requisite strength of voice."

"Hello——o——o!——here! John Dashleigh!

come back!" shouted half adozen pairs of vigorous lungs the feeble pipe of Deacon Sweeny joining in the chorus.

At hearing himself thus vociferously called, John turned back and retraced his steps to the porch of the meeting-house, wondering what could be the cause of such an unusual outcry.

"Mr. John Dashleigh," said the Parson, "you will grieve to be informed that, by a most unfortunate omission of a requisite and wholesome formality, the wedding of your cousin Lucy and young Joab Sweeny must be postponed."

"Oh, no!" whispered the Deacon, with terror-blanched lips.

"At least, such, I fear, must be the result of what has happened," resumed the Parson. "Your uncle, being not only learned in the law, but the father of the intended bride, ought to be informed of the untoward event, and consulted with concerning it and its consequences. Will you be so good, therefore, as to hasten home and communicate the news to him, privately, I should advise; and also request him, in my name, to come immediately to my house,

where Deacon Sweeny and myself will wait to see him. I think," added the Parson, with a quiet smile, "that we had better not go to your house, Deacon, until we have first taken counsel with the Colonel."

"Oh, by no means!" cried the Deacon, eagerly.

John received the message and hastened home, where, first having seen his aunt Betsy and told her of what had happened, he sought the Colonel in his bedroom, where he sat reading the newspaper and waiting for dinner, and delivered his errand.

The Colonel heard the news with manifest concern. He dropped his paper, and gave a prolonged whistle. "Deacon forgot it, eh?" said he.

"Yes," replied John; "so I understood."

"Whew! and wont Axy all but bust when she finds it out! Actilly, 'tain't best to tell her; the Deacon, raly, wouldn't be safe; she'd take his pelt, I du believe. I tell ye, John," continued his uncle, after a thoughtful pause, "you jest keep your own counsel, and I'll run right up to the Parson's. 'Tain't so bad as it

might be; though, if the women get holt on't, it'll make some trouble, mebby. I'll jest take a look at the statoot, and see percizely what the law is on this point, and then I'll go right along. But, publishment or no publishment, them two must be married to-night. I've set my heart on't, as I've told ye more'n once; and, besides, I've swore to't, and it's got to be."

So saying, the Colonel took down his well-thumbed copy of the Revised Statutes, opened at the index, then turned to the chapter entitled "An Act for the due and orderly celebrating of Marriage," and brought all the force of his intellect to bear upon the question of the construction and true interpretation, intent and meaning of the clause which prescribed that, "no person shall be joined in marriage, before the purpose or intention of the parties proceeding therein hath been sufficiently published in some public meeting or congregation, on the Lord's Day, or some public fast, thanksgiving, or lecture day, in the parish or society where the parties, or either of them, do ordinarily reside."

In the mean time, Lieutenant Jones, whose dwelling was the next door to Deacon Sweeny's, had hurried home, and told the important news to his wife; and that worthy lady, leaving the care of the roast to a little black girl, lost no time in going, by the back way, to her neighbors, and imparting to Mrs. Sweeny and Joab the astounding intelligence which so nearly concerned them. It was in consequence of this act of neighborly kindness, that Lieutenant Jones's household were, that day, forced to dine on chicken pie; the little black girl having proved unworthy of the trust reposed in her by her too confiding mistress, and the subject matter of the trust itself, to wit, a fat and tender twelve-pound spring turkey, having been suffered to burn upon the spit, until it was nothing but a crisped and blackened cinder.

Though she afterwards attempted, on many an occasion, to describe the rage of Mrs. Sweeny at hearing of the Deacon's default and its direful effect, Mrs. Jones was never able to do the matter full justice, as she was wont freely to confess; albeit she was a woman of fluent

speech, and not a little vain of her gift in that respect, withal. Her own subsequent fit of anger, at beholding the charred remains of the unfortunate turkey afore-mentioned, although it struck the deepest terror into the heart of the negligent little black wench, and, indeed, appalled even the brave militia-man, her husband, was, in comparison, but an ordinary South-easter to a West Indian hurricane. What Mrs. Jones's ready tongue repeatedly failed to accomplish, my feeble pen shall not attempt to perform.

When the first furious gust of her indignation had spent itself, and had given place to fierce but less violent blasts of wrathful emotion, Mrs. Sweeny seized her bonnet and shawl, and, followed by Joab, started forthwith, at a rapid pace, for Colonel Manners' house, whither, as she supposed, her guilty husband had fled for refuge. The Parson and the Deacon, waiting for the Colonel's coming, saw her through the windows of the parsonage parlor, as she went trooping by, and knew then that the rumor had reached her ears. The Deacon turned livid and shivered in his

shoes, but the wiser Parson took heart and comforted his trembling parishioner. "The worst is over," said he; "such violent physical exercise will not fail to carry off and, as it were, allay the superfluity of her mental irritation. I think, therefore, that, as my dinner is not yet ready, we had better go up to the Colonel's also; for otherwise it is plain that we shall not now see him.

So it happened, that when Colonel Manners, after turning down a leaf at the act aforesaid concerning Marriage, returned the Revised Statutes to it splace on the shelf, and, putting on his hat, had got as far as the mouth of the lane, on his way to the Parson's, he beheld his sister, the Deacon's wife, bearing down towards him with incredible swiftness, with Joab following closely in her wake; and, in the distance, he descried the Parson and Deacon Sweeny, hovering at a safe interval astern, while, all along the street, the neighbors, standing at their doors, watched from afar the progress of the squadron.

"Well! there!" said the Colonel, in a despairing tone, as he came to a halt, and taking

off his hat rubbed his scalp in great perplexity; "now ef there ain't a going to be a time, I own I never see one!"

As soon as Mrs. Sweeny reached the place where her brother was standing, bareheaded, she forthwith essayed to speak; but the tumult of her emotions, together with the extreme velocity of her pace, had well nigh deprived her of all power to use that unruly member of her body, for the usual vigor of which she was so justly remarkable. She was able only to gasp forth a few fragments of exceedingly abusive and calumnious epithets, reference thereby being had to her husband, Deacon Sweeny. This unwonted impotence on the part of the lady gave her brother an unexpected advantage, which he did not fail to improve. "I declare," said he, addressing her with great asperity, "ye act more like a dumb fool than ever I knew ye to;" which was, indeed, the exact truth; although, to be sure, the Colonel did not use the adjective in its ordinary and literal sense, but chose it to qualify the noun, on account of its innocent similarity in sound to a more profane word. "Here ye are," he

continued, "a racing down here like a ravin' distracted cretur got out o' Bedlam; and the upshot on't 'll be that ye'll stir up Betsey and Lucy, and frighten 'em about the publishment, when, ef ye'd ha' just kep away, they'd ha' never known on't till arterwards, and no harm done. And you, too, Joab; what do you mean by tearin' along the street arter this fashion, with all the neighbors a lookin' on, a wonderin' and makin' fun. You ort to know better. I declare, you put me out of all consait with ye!"

"And where's the Deacon?" cried Mrs. Sweeny, who, by this time, had recovered breath enough to speak; "where is he; the ridic'lous, forgetful, good-for-nothin,' onnateral old ——."

"Now do you jest come in here!" muttered the Colonel through his closed teeth, as he suddenly griped his sister by the arm, and walked her before him through the gate out of the street.

"Ow-ah—let me alone!" cried Mrs. Sweeny. But the Colonel had grown desperate. He tightened his grip, and gave his sister a shake

or two that set her teeth a chattering. "I tell ye," said he, in a low, determined tone, "ef ye open yer head to let out on't any of yer spiteful slang agin yer husband, or anybody else, I'll be d——d ef I don't give ye what he'd ort to gi'n years ago, by gracious! I will, ef it costs a string o' lawsuits! So shet up yer mouth!" he added, shaking his head threateningly, as he let go his hold upon her arm, "and don't let me hear a crooked word out on't."

Mrs. Sweeny was, for once in her life, pretty thoroughly cowed; and, at this moment, greatly to her surprise, her husband and Parson Graves appeared at the gate; but the virago, into whose heart the Colonel's threat had struck a wholesome terror, dared not open her lips to revile the Deacon, especially as he was in the company of the Parson.

"Mornin', Parson; mornin', Deacon," cried the Colonel, trying to assume a manner of smiling indifference. "Come in, Deacon; don't be afraid, your wife and I have heerd all about it. There ain't much harm done, I guess."

"And what can be done, Colonel Manners?" inquired the Parson, coming forward, while the

Deacon, shrinking at the sight of the blazing fury which flashed from his wife's eyes, still hung in the rear.

"Jest come into the house and we'll talk it all over," replied the Colonel, leading the way; but, at the same time, casting backward a glance of warning at his sister.

As soon as the whole party were seated in the bedroom, the Colonel went to seek his wife, who was not far off, having, from the window of Lucy's chamber, beheld, with exultation, the victory which her husband had gained over Mrs. Sweeny. He found her upon the stairs, and briefly communicated to her the intelligence of which she had already been informed by John Dashleigh.

"Good gracious me!" cried Mrs. Manners, with well-feigned surprise, "and there's all the invitations to the wedding have been sent, and a good many are comin' from out o' town. What on earth's to be done?"

"Now, Betsey," said the Colonel, taking his wife by the hand, "I'm dreffully perplexed; and I beg on ye to be a reasonable woman, as you can be well enough, if ye'r only a mind to.

Don't go to bein' sot and def to argyment, as women will be sometimes. You know I have swore a solemn oath that this weddin' has got to take place to-night. I nyther want to break my oath or to have a fuss a keepin' on't with you or Lucy."

"But to be married without a publishment," said Mrs. Manners, in a tone of gentle remonstrance.

"Betsey!" cried the Colonel, a little impatiently, "you know you've seen me marry, fust and last, a hull barn-yard full of couples, that probably had never been published. But come, there's the Parson, Axy, Joab, and the Deacon, all a waitin' down in the bedroom to hear my opinion about the matter. I'm a goin' to read 'em the law, and explain upon't. Jest come along, and ef ye'r only reasonable I'll satisfy you all."

The Colonel was evidently sadly bothered and annoyed, and his wife, who loved him with all her heart, said nothing more to add to his vexation. "I'm willing, husband," said she, pressing his hand, "that if your heart is set upon it, your oath should be fulfilled to-night;

only it's natural to feel sorry to have our only child married like a girl that's run away with, without being first published."

"I know it, Betsey," said the Colonel, "but it can't be helped."

So Mrs. Manners, without further remark, followed her husband into the bedroom, where the others were waiting. The Deacon felt greatly relieved at their arrival, which was, indeed, for him most opportune; for even the reverend presence of Parson Graves would not have availed much longer to have made Mrs. Sweeny keep the peace toward her husband. As soon as the usual greetings had been exchanged between Mrs. Manners and the visitors, the Colonel took down the statute-book again, and opened at the place where the leaf was turned down.

"We all know that the usual form of publication of intention has been omitted," said Parson Graves, looking at his watch, and thinking of his dinner. "Let us lose no time in deciding what is to be done, with respect to the wedding, which, otherwise, would have been celebrated to-night. Joab, you are one

of the parties most interested. Are you willing that the ceremony should be postponed until another week, in order that due notice may be given next Sabbath-day from the pulpit?"

Now Joab's mind, during his hurried walk, and while he had been waiting in the bedroom, had been greatly exercised and disturbed by a most distressing doubt. In a word, he feared that the validity of his prospective rights, as a husband, in his intended wife's estate, might, perhaps, be affected and impaired by a non-compliance with all the requirements of the law. "For my part," said he, wriggling in his chair, as he replied to Parson Graves' question, "I should like to know whether it's legal in every point to go on. If it ain't legal every way—and I don't see how it can be—I must say I'd rather wait. I ain't in no sich a hurry as to want to break the law."

"Humph!" said the Colonel, regarding his nephew with a look of contempt, as he concluded his reply, "ye'r purty cool-headed, and cool-blooded though, for a man of your age, in your sittywashun."

"I'm sure," said the Parson, "I admire the caution and prudence which the young man evinces. If it is not legal to proceed, I cannot perform the ceremony."

The Colonel shook his head as a warning to his sister, who, with difficulty, restrained her wrath. "The weddin'," said he, slowly, and still looking at the discomfited Joab with scornful anger; "the weddin' ither takes place to-night or never. I've a fust rate reason for bein' sot and posityve, and I mean jest what I say. Ef Joab aint a-mind to be married to my darter, I aint a goin' to urge him; and ef Parson Graves wants to have it said that his parishioners had to send out for a minister to act at a weddin', well and good; I've nothin' more to say, jest now, on that pint."

"Of course——" began Joab.

"As for the matter of its bein' accordin' to law, I don't suppose it is, strickly speakin'," continued the Colonel, unmindful of the interruption. "I'll jest read and explain what's said on that pint. You see, Parson," he added, after having read from the book which he held

in his hand, "you see the statoot pervides that no person shall be jined in wedlock, without they've fust ben published in a sartin manner pinted out. Well, that looks, to be sure, at fust sight, as if it meant to say no publishment, no jinin'—but 'tain't so, and it don't mean so; for the third section here pervides, that, ef any justice or minister shall *jine* any person in marriage—shall JINE any person in marriage," he repeated with increased emphasis, and looking up over his spectacles at the Parson, "without being fust published, they shall pay a fine of sixty-seven dollars. Now jest look at the argyment. You see it's plain that when persons are married without bein' published, they're ither jined or they ain't jined. Ef they *are* jined, why they *are* jined, and that's all that's wanted, and ef they *ain't* jined they *ain't* jined, and that third section is all nym and doll, don't mean nothin', and can't be broke; and ef that's the case, what on airth did the Legislater put it into the law for? But you see it does mean suthin', and can be broke, and it follers that persons can be jined in marriage, who hain't

ben published; only them that performs the ceremony and doos jine' em, breaks the law in so doin', and is liable to pay the penalty."

Here the Colonel paused, and, having got a little heated, he took off his spectacles and wiped his forehead with his bandanna.

"Jest so," said Mrs. Sweeny, to whom, nevertheless, the Colonel's exposition of the meaning of the statute had been wholly incomprehensible. "It's asp lain as print that it's all exactly accordin' to the law."

"I think I understand your argument, Colonel," said the Parson, who had listened attentively, sitting, meanwhile, very straight and upright in his chair, with his hands resting on the top of his cane standing between his knees, his eyebrows and chin a little elevated, and his head cocked thoughtfully to one side. "Allow me to see the book," he added, putting on his spectacles—"ah! yes—section third—um-m—any minister—um-m-shall pay--sixty-seven dollars—um—one moiety—um-m—and so forth: yes, Colonel, I think you're right; and, with respect to the fine——"

"Why! of course, you wont lose nothin' in

that way!" cried the Colonel with great emphasis—"the Deacon and I will stand in that gap, if need be;—hey, Deacon?"

"Y-yes, of course," replied Deacon Sweeny, under the strait duress of his wife's glance.

"I'd be willin' to give twice the money, jest to see the feller that 'ud dare to prosecute," cried the Colonel, smiting the table with his fist.

"Nevertheless," remarked the Parson, "I must confess I like not the idea of infracting the law of the land, even when I may do so with impunity. It becomes not those to whom authority is entrusted to use it in a manner which is by law forbidden."

"Well, Parson," said the Colonel; "as for that, I suppose I'm in authority as much as you be; and, though as a ginral thing I intend to be a law-abidin' man, which I ort to be as a citizen and a freeman, and partic'larly as a magistrate, I'd as lief as not tell ye that I expect I've broke this identical statoot more'n fifty times. Ef a couple looks old enough to have a right to be married as they please, I jine' em without bein' too curous."

"Is it possible!" cried the Parson; "and that's the secret of the reason why young people from beyond the line seek your house so much more frequently than mine, as I have heard?"

"Egzackly," replied the Colonel, with a shrewd smile; "now you've found it out, you'll be gettin' my business away from me—now you've larnt the trick of my trade: and a pretty good business it is, too, about this time o' year. Last Thanksgivin' night, when we got home from Andrew's and Sally's weddin', up to the Deacon's here, you rec'lect, we found two couple a waitin' to be jined; didn't we, Betsey? and I jined 'em, too; though I hain't no more idee they was published, than I have they was Hindoos—not a bit."

Encouraged by these precedents, Parson Graves no longer hesitated; but, in reply to a straightforward inquiry, propounded by Mrs. Sweeny, signified his willingness to officiate at the ceremony, by which Joab and Lucy were to be made one flesh, notwithstanding the omission of the public notice of intention.

This announcement seemed to give universal satisfaction to everybody present. The Dea-

con's heart, especially, was thereby lightened of a heavy load, and he experienced at once a remarkable exaltation of spirits. His wife, too, was rendered so good-natured, for the time being, that she even smiled grimly when Parson Graves, with a dry humor peculiar to himself, described the Deacon's dismay at the meeting-house porch door. But Joab, in spite of the cheerful demeanor which he thought it wise to assume, was still secretly uneasy. "Law's so full o' ketches," said he to himself, "and Uncle Starr, with all his knowledge, hain't learnt 'em all by considerable." So, while the rest of the company were listening to Parson Graves, he picked up the sheepskin-covered book from the table, and slyly read every section of the statute concerning marriage.

Though stoutly pressed to stay to dinner, the visitors, one and all, excused themselves, and shortly afterwards departed in a body, Parson Graves and Joab leading the way, and the Deacon and his wife following after, arm in arm, in what seemed to be a very lovingly conjugal style. So the neighbors, hurrying to

the windows as they passed by, knew by this token that the wedding was not to be postponed; for, as Mrs. Ensign Vickars shrewdly remarked, if harm had come of the Deacon's heedlessness, he never would have dared to trust himself so near to his wife upon the same day.

CHAPTER X.

At last, the brief November's day came to its close, and the sun, which, during the afternoon, had been shining with a pale luster, through a thin veil of fleecy clouds, blazed forth round, red, and bright, just before he disappeared beyond the steep southwestern hills, leaving behind him the sunset sky, glowing with a lustrous apple-green tint, streaked with long trailing clouds of rose and flame color, which, after awhile, faded slowly until their gorgeous hues were changed to purple and sober gray. The night set in clear and cold, with a fresh, keen, bracing northwestern gale blowing down the valley, and whistling among the naked, swaying branches of the button-woods and elms. The stars came out, sparkling like frosty particles in the deep blue-black sky; but, even brighter than they, the gleaming windows of the Manners mansion shone forth like beacons into the moonless night; and even the yards in the rear were

illuminated by the flash and glare of lanterns, carried in the hands of old Tite and his staff of helpers, who, as the numerous wedding guests arrived, led away their horses to the sheds and stables, there to feast at plenteous mangers full of newly-threshed oats, and well-stuffed racks of sweet and savory hay.

Meantime, all within doors was humming like a hive. There was not a household in all the Niptuck valley, however poor and humble, which had not there present at least its one representative member, either in the parlor or the kitchen; and, from the neighboring towns, cousins and friends had come to swell the throng of merry guests, with which, spacious as it was, the old house seemed full to overflowing. The greater number were gathered in the best room, waiting for the expected appearance of the bride and bridegroom elect. But Lucy, in her chamber, was still under the hands of the dressy mantua-maker; while the bridesmaids, admitted, by virtue of their office, to behold the spectacle of the toilette, stood by, making vain and unheeded offers of assistance, and at times

breaking forth into enthusiastic expressions of admiration at the rare loveliness of the mute and trembling bride, the beauty and costliness of her attire, and the wonderful genius and skill of the fashionable mantua-maker.

Joab and the groomsmen, in another chamber, awaited with impatience the summons to join the bridal train, beguiling the tedium of delay by frequent admiring surveys of their own images reflected in the mirror, and by watching from the window each new arrival, and the out-door commotion excited thereby. Joab himself, of course, formed the principal figure of this sprucely-attired group. He was dressed in the new suit constructed for the occasion by the city tailor; a black swallow-tailed coat, a white sprigged vest, and dove-colored trowsers of fine kerseymere, so short as to leave exposed his thick and clumsy ankles, covered by white silk stockings. His bony hands were encased in white kid gloves, and a stiff, tight, white cravat encircled in its strict folds his lean and scraggy throat. The little that was left of his hair above his forehead was brushed stiffly upwards, and his long

earlocks, which whilome were wont to hang straight adown his cheeks, were curled and frizzled into knots like rosettes above each red and shapeless ear. Thus arrayed, Joab's heart beat beneath his ruffled shirt-front with a generous emotion, longing for the moment to arrive when others, as well as himself, might be gratified and delighted by gazing at so splendid a spectacle as he saw and felt himself to be.

In the kitchen were assembled a score of the negro population of the valley, a merry, jolly crew, listening, though with many noisy interjectional exclamations of delight and applause, to the tuning of a venerable fiddle, which Primus Ball, Aunt Daffy's ante-nuptial son, had brought with him to furnish the music for the expected country dance; while Aunt Daffy herself, with Mrs. Dashleigh and Susan, was busy in the dining-room, giving the finishing touches to the array set out upon the long table, in the center of which the great bride's loaf, covered with glittering frosting, loomed up in the midst like some tall mountain top mantled with eternal snows.

The mistress of the house and her nephew, John Dashleigh, were nowhere to be seen; but in the great parlor the good Colonel, gorgeously attired in a blue coat with brilliant gilt buttons, drab breeches, and a buff vest of military cut, almost hidden by the ruffle of his shirt, stood talking with Judge Slow, of Windham, near by where Deacon Sweeny and his wife were seated, each silently remembering the evening on which, five-and-twenty years before, the same old apartment had been the scene of their own wedding festivities. There was the same wide, cavernous, old-fashioned fire-place, in which then, as now, a burning pile of seasoned hickory-wood sent a roaring blaze far up into the huge throat of the chimney flue, illuminating the room with a ruddy glow, which even the brilliant but paler light of the numerous candles could not wholly overpower. There were the same high-backed chairs, the same bow-legged, claw-footed tables, but grown darker in color with increased age; the same corner cupboard, revealing through its glazed door treasures of ancient silver heir-looms and old-

fashioned painted china; and there were a few among the gray-haired people present who had been brisk and jocund guests at the former wedding feast. A sigh escaped from the flinty heart of Mrs. Sweeny, and fluttered through between her thin and wrinkled lips, as she recalled to mind the time when the withered old man at her side had been a bridegroom, not ill-favored in her eyes, and she herself had figured bravely as a young and comely bride. Even the Deacon sighed, also, as he thought regretfully of the years that had sped their flight since his wedding-day, though each one had left behind it at least a thousand dollars increase to his hoard of wealth.

As for the rest of the company, with few exceptions, they were as gay and canty as such usually staid people ever permit themselves to be. Each guest, upon his or her arrival, had been invited to partake of the steaming contents of an immense china punch-bowl, of ancient shape and pattern, that usually occupied a place in the corner cupboard, but which now stood upon a buffet in the hall, and was kept replenished with hot and well-

spiced brandy-sling. The men, of course, each drank his glassful, and of the ladies there was not, (after a little coy hesitation and renewed pressing,) a single one that refused to comply with the hospitable invitation. It is not wonderful that the guests, already full of the dainties of a Thanksgiving dinner, what with the potent sling, the excitement of the occasion, and the pleasant anticipations of further good cheer, were complacent, good humored, and abundantly disposed to be soberly merry. The young women were ready to blush and giggle at every thing which the young fellows said or did; who, on their part, were inspired to utter a great many gallant speeches, and to do a variety of smart things, the very thought of which, at another time, would have appalled them into a state of dumb and stupid bashfulness. Ichabod Pettigrew, when with a heart as tender and impressible as ever palpitated in any shepherd's bosom, was yet, for all that, a bachelor at the mature age of five-and-thirty, only because he had never dared to ask a young woman for her company, did, that night, venture to squeeze the fat little fingers of Hul-

dah Pritchard's left hand; a gentle pressure, which Huldah gently and considerately returned. And though aforetime she had been heard frequently to ridicule Ichabod's uncouth appearance and awkward deportment, and to express her wonder as to whom he would ever get to have him, it, nevertheless, came to pass that, a year from that very night, Huldah was not only the lawful wedded wife of this same Ichabod Pettigrew, but was also the proud and happy mother of another mortal bearing the same name. Aholiab Fenn, who, next to Andrew Bunn, was reputed to have the drollest speech of any man in town, was that night funnier than ever; nay, funnier than even Andrew himself, whom marriage and family cares had sobered somewhat, and kept the little group in the corner, of which he was the center, in a constant titter of laughter. The new district schoolmaster, too, rejoicing in the prospect of the fat living by which Thanksgiving week was likely to be distinguished, forgot, nay—stooped from the dignity of his station, and walked about the room, with his hand under his coat-tails, smiling grimly,

and sometimes even deigning to talk awhile with some of his older female scholars, with an air of stiff familiarity, as near like to any common mortal as could have been expected.

At last Parson Graves arrived, very late, and threw off his long cloak in a hurry; but staid, nevertheless, to drink a tumbler of sling at the buffet. As he entered the parlor from the hall, in advance of his daughter, Miss Tabitha, and a little band of elderly maidens that usually followed in her train, the buzz of laughter and conversation was hushed for a moment. The older people who were seated rose from their chairs, and the young folks crowded closer together and spoke in whispers, suppressing their glee. The Colonel hastily advanced through the press, and shook hands with the Parson; and then, quickly turning to Miss Tabitha, greeted her with an air of marked and ceremonious deference. For, although her father was looked up to by everybody in the Niptuck valley, with unmingled reverence, it must be confessed that his benevolent countenance, and easy, good-humored manners, failed to beget in the minds of his parishioners that

sense of awful respect which was inspired by Miss Tabitha's lofty demeanor and severe aspect.

She was a tall, lean, sharp-visaged spinster, with light blue eyes, a freckled complexion, and sandy hair; and was, as everybody knew, the very incarnation of all the Christian graces and virtues of the female sort. Nevertheless, such is the depravity of the perverse human heart, that there was scarcely a man, woman or child in the whole parish that liked her; except, perhaps, her body guard of vestals. The young women, especially, heartily detested her; and even their mothers, while holding her up to them as an exemplar, if the truth had been known, loved her no better than their daughters did. But it would have been thought an offense akin to blasphemy to have given utterance to these sentiments; and when the village girls ventured to murmur and repine against the austere rule and annoying supervision that Miss Tabitha constantly exercised over their conduct and pursuits, it was always done in whispers, and with carefully closed bedchamber doors.

Next to the grace of piety, this exemplary virgin held in esteem the virtue of propriety; and, indeed, so intense was her aversion to anything which was not strictly and rigidly proper, that her mind was constantly busy, endeavoring to detect improprieties in everything she saw or heard other people do or say, in order that she might reform or suppress them. With the same good purpose and intent, she was at great pains to enlarge the scope of her observation, and so used to go about the neighborhood on various errands of ostensible charity and benevolence, taking these opportunities to spy into other people's affairs, and pick up every scandalous rumor and piece of gossip that was astir in the parish. By constant and vigilant practice, therefore, her faculties had grown so keen that she espied latent indecorums which a common observer never could have discovered; and quite frequently the young girls of the village were dismayed by caustic rebukes from Miss Tabby, for having been unwittingly guilty of gross breaches of propriety in speech or conduct, of the nature of which, even, the poor little,

innocent transgressors had before that time been as ignorant as Eve was of sin before she saw the serpent.

When Parson Graves, upon returning from the Colonel's house that day, had informed his virtuous daughter that the wedding was to take place in the evening, in spite of the omission of the formality of publication, Miss Tabitha, whose aversion to weddings has hereinbefore been mentioned, at once perceived the impropriety of such a proceeding, and, during the whole time of dinner, and, indeed, all throughout the afternoon, she protested with great bitterness against the proposition of consummating the nuptial ceremony, before the usual preliminary, which the law prescribed, had been duly observed. What her arguments lacked in intrinsic cogency was fully made up by her constant reiteration of them; and when at last, at a rather late hour, Parson Graves and his daughter set out for the Colonel's house, he had promised to advise, or at any rate to suggest a postponement of the wedding. As soon, therefore, as the worthy minister had finished shaking hands with the most wealthy

and distinguished of his flock that were congregated in the parlor, and had warmed his chilly hands before the crackling blaze in the fire-place, he drew the Colonel aside into the chimney corner, and began to express the hesitation which he felt about proceeding further with the ceremony. "In fine," said he, in conclusion, "I'm inclined to think that, on the whole, you had better let me announce that, for this reason, it is thought advisable to put the wedding off; at the same time, if you please, appointing another time, and renewing the invitations."

Now the Colonel, though he held the Parson and his sacred office in great reverence, was, nevertheless, so indignant at this proposal, that he was sorely tempted to commit the sin which easily beset him, and, in fact, liked to have muttered an oath loud enough for Parson Graves and the Recording Angel to overhear. And, though he did not at first dare to trust himself to speak, his inflamed countenance very plainly betrayed the nature of his thoughts and emotions. Conscious of this, he cautiously avoided meeting the Parson's glance. So,

biting his lips, and looking abroad at a venture, his eyes chanced to meet those of Miss Tabitha, in which, at that moment, twinkled a gleam of spiteful intelligence; for she, well knowing the subject of the conference between her father and the Colonel, stood at a distance, across the room, watching them as they talked, and waiting, with malicious satisfaction, for the result which she confidently expected to happen. This circumstance added fuel to the hot flame of the Colonel's wrath. He did not venture to reply to the Parson, lest he should be betrayed into gross unseemliness of speech. "Ef it's the same to you, Parson," said he, at length, "I'd ruther talk about this matter, ef it must be talked over agin, in some other place. There's too many within ear-shot, here."

"Certainly," said the Parson, and straightway followed his host into the dining-room, from whence the Colonel led the way into the bedroom where he and his wife usually slept, while the Parson lingered a little behind, gazing, with a good appetite, at the tempting display which covered the long table. "Indeed," thought he, "but it would be a pity to

suffer such a feast to wait longer for the guests!"

It is needless to set forth, with particularity, the conversation which ensued between the Parson and the Colonel. It is sufficient to say, only, that Miss Tabitha's arguments, being stated at second-hand by her father, and without the spiteful energy and iteration with which they had been originally presented by their inventor, seemed to have grown suddenly feeble. They were attacked by the Colonel, moreover, with great zeal and vigor; and being, in Miss Tabitha's absence, like unto a fortress without a garrison to defend it, they were, so to speak, right speedily carried by storm, and blown up and demolished without loss of time. The Colonel showed triumphantly that the decision of the question of propriety, so far as it concerned the principal parties, viz., the bride and bridegroom, appertained to themselves alone, assisted therein, withal, if need be, by the advice of their parents.

"Ef *they're* agreed, I should like to know whose business 'tis?" said the Colonel; "and

as for you," continued he, "though I ain't a minister to be sure, fer from it, arter you've done and said all, I've suthin of a character to maintain myself, though I say it, as p'raps shouldn't say it, which I don't mean as a gineral thing to do aught that ain't respectable and proper——"

"Oh, no—I—" hastily cried the Parson, who began to be a little uneasy at the sarcastic tone of his influential parishioner.

"And though p'raps it don't look well in me to be sayin' so, I think, actilly, my neighbors are willin' to give me credit for bein' a law-abidin' and orderly citizen," added the Colonel.

"Oh! they do, they do," said the Parson, soothingly.

"Well, I raly hope so," continued the Colonel, in a mollified tone; "same time, as I told ye to-day, Parson, I've jined scores of couples, that probably never'd ha' been published nor a sign on't, and I only wish there'd one sich come along to-night, and I'd show you I wan't afeard to do it agin."

At this moment there came a loud knock at the front door. "I wonder who's come now?"

said the Colonel. "Ef it hadn't ha' been fer this hitch they'd ha' been too late fer the ceremony."

"Well, well," cried the Parson, taking the hint and rising. "I shall proceed, for it would be unpleasant to have a delay; though, after all, as Tabitha says, a slight disappointment of this kind might very likely be blessed to the spiritual welfare of the young couple, and teach them to moderate the fire of passion, and illustrate the uncertainty of human plans and calculations."

"Well," said the Colonel, "I'll go and speak to Miss Manners, and have her hurry the young folks, ef they ain't got ready, and you can set here while I'm gone, or go into the parlor, jest as you're a mind."

"I'll wait a moment," said the Parson, who was determined not to give Miss Tabitha a chance to remonstrate against the result of the conference.

As the Colonel opened the bedroom door he met his wife. She was a little flurried and spoke rapidly, and with a catch in her breath.

"Why! what's the matter?" asked the

Colonel. "I can't make head nor tail what you say."

"Oh, nothing," replied his wife, in the same hurried, flustered way; "I was going to ask you—but never mind—they must wait till after the wedding."

"Wait!" repeated the Colonel; "who wait? What is it?"

"Why," replied Mrs. Manners, more steadily; "these people that have just come and wish to be married; but I told 'em we were going to have a wedding of our own, and so——"

As his wife began to speak, the Colonel noticed, for the first time, that a strange man and woman were sitting together in the dining-room, against the wainscot, where they were shielded by the mantel from the brilliant light of the candles that stood upon it. The man's figure was tall, and apparently stout. His swarthy face was almost hidden by a pair of immense, bushy whiskers. His age, judging by his looks, the Colonel thought might be near thirty-five. His companion was closely muffled in a large cloak, that completely enveloped her form, and her face was so nearly obscured by the

shapeless, quilted hood she wore, that it was impossible to make out a single feature; though the Colonel noticed the ends of her bright red curls, straggling out from beneath the cape of her hood, and streaming down upon her shoulders in a dowdy fashion. As soon as he found, by his wife's speech, upon what errand the strangers had come, he stopped her short.

"So you want to be married, do ye?" said he, accosting the man abruptly.

The stranger hesitated a moment, and then replied in a deep, gruff voice:

"Yes, sir," said he.

"Are you published?" pursued the Colonel, eagerly.

"No, sir," said the man; "we——"

"Never mind tellin' the reason. I don't keer to know it," cried the Colonel, hastily interrupting the other, lest he should disclose some matter that would appear to be a weighty objection against proceeding in the affair.

"Very well, sir," said the man.

"Though, to be sure," added the Colonel, "I s'pose I oughter make one query, and I must. As fer you, sir, your looks shows that

you've nobody's consent to ask but your sweetheart's. But how is it with the gal?"

"As for that, Judge," said the man, "ef the woman won't be offended, I'll take my oath five year will more'n kiver the odds between our ages."

"All right," cried the Colonel, joyously, his face beaming with delight. "I tell ye, you've come to the right place, and in jest the nick o' time. We've a weddin' of our own here to-night, and I'll jine ye free gratis for nothin', and give you as good a supper as you ever eat into the bargain. Betsey, jest step into the bedroom with these folks, and have 'em take off their things, and send the Parson out here. He's in the bedroom. I jest want to speak a word to him; and I say, while I'm a talkin', to save time, you find out the names and where they live, and write the stifakit, will ye, and have it all ready for me sign?"

So Mrs. Manners led the way into the bedroom, followed by the strangers, and the Parson, who supposed that they were guests, just arrived, going into the bedroom to add their outside clothing to the heaps and piles of

cloaks, shawls, tippets, and other garments with which the bed and chairs were encumbered, looked at them without wonder; and, upon being told by Mrs. Manners that her husband wished to see him, immediately stepped forth into the dining-room.

"Parson!" cried the Colonel, beginning without preface; "that couple that's jest gone in there with my wife has come to be jined, and hain't ben published nither, and I'm a goin' to do it for 'em. Don't ye remember, I was a wishin' for some sich a couple to come jest as they knocked at the door?"

"Indeed!" said the Parson; "it does seem as if the finger of Providence could be seen in it."

"Don't it?" said the Colonel, gleefully; "now, actilly, don't it?"

"And you are going to marry them immediately; before the other ceremony?" inquired the Parson.

"In five minutes from this time," said the Colonel, looking at the clock, "they'll be husband and wife, as tight as ever any two were tied, I tell ye. I ain't a great while a doin'

on't," said he, rubbing his hands, "but I do it sartin."

"Come," said Mrs. Manners, opening the bedroom door, and looking out; "the certificate is written, and these people have got to go into the other State to-night."

"From Massachusetts, then, are they?" asked the Parson.

"I expect so," replied the Colonel; "but come, I want you to stand by and see me perform. Why! why!" he continued, as followed by the Parson he entered the bedroom, "you hain't taken your things off. That ain't a goin' to do. You've got to stay to supper, now I tell ye."

"I don't know whether we can or not," said the man.

"Perhaps the young lady will be more willin' to take off her hood after she's married," suggested Mrs. Manners.

"Well, well," cried the Colonel, "it don't make no difference, I expect, so let her wear her bonnet till she gets ready to take it off. Now then, my friends, ef you're ready, jest stand up—that's it—and jine hands—yes—take

holt o'hands—that's it. Now, Parson, seein's you're here, ef you'll make a prayer it'll seem more reglar and solemn. You needn't be afeard, Parson," he added, with a sly look, "there ain't no statoot agen prayin', jest when you've a mind to, in this Christian land."

"No, thank God!" cried Parson Graves, with great fervency: and immediately shutting his eyes very tight, and grasping the back of a chair, he began to invoke the blessing of Heaven upon the pending marriage rite, and the parties who were thereby to be joined.

In the mean time, Miss Tabitha, who had witnessed, with secret uneasiness, the departure of her father and the Colonel from the parlor, and whose disquiet had increased during each moment of their prolonged absence, was at last no longer able to restrain either her curiosity or her desire to meddle with and thwart the business of the occasion. Slipping from the parlor, therefore, she went softly out into the dining-room, from whence she was guided by the sound of her father's voice into the bed-room. Her astonishment and displeasure at the spectacle which she beheld was unbounded;

and no sooner had the Parson pronounced the final Amen of his pious invocation, than Miss Tabitha precluded the Colonel from resuming, at once, his part in the ceremony, by asking, in a tone of great asperity, whether anybody would be good enough to oblige her by telling her what was going on.

"You can see for yourself, Miss Tabby," said the Colonel, trying to speak jovially, in order to hide his vexation, "it's a weddin'!"

"Ah! a wedding, hey?" cried Miss Tabitha, looking towards the young woman with a reproving severity of aspect that was truly appalling. "And may I be allowed to ask what wedding it is, and whose it is, and why it takes place in this private manner?"

To these inquiries Parson Graves proceeded to make reply. "The Colonel, here," said he, with a deprecatory manner, "is about to marry this worthy young couple, who, by-the-by, my daughter, have never been published, in order to ——."

"I see, I see," cried Miss Tabitha, with a virulent energy of tone and expression. "I see it all. And do you ma'am," she asked,

turning to Mrs. Manners, "and do you, a church-member, and a Christian mother, countenance such awful and scandalous improprieties?"

"Ma'am!" said Mrs. Manners, reddening, "improprieties, did you say?"

"Yes, ma'am, improprieties," repeated the virtuous Miss Tabitha; "for my part, I must say that I consider a form of marriage, without a previous publishment, as highly improper; yes, ma'am, grossly, scandalously, wickedly, sinfully improper, ma'am; and as a mere form, and no marriage at all!"

"I guess, ma'am," suddenly cried the sharp voice of Mrs. Sweeny, whose inflamed visage at this moment appeared at the door, "I guess, ma'am, some folks would be mighty glad to get married themselves, publishment or no publishment; and it's jest because nobody ain't fool enough to have some folks, that some folks are allus wantin' to be a stickin' their nose inter everybody else's business. But they can't break up this match; no, that's what they can't!"

The boundless rage and astonishment of Miss

Tabitha at this speech of Mrs. Sweeny's cannot be easily described. For once in her life, the Deacon's wife found herself opposed to a more wrathful antagonist than even herself. The pair stood in silence, eying each other with furious and contemptuous glances. The Deacon's wife, though a little appalled at the idea of confronting the minister's daughter, nevertheless stood her ground bravely. She had overheard, in the parlor, whispers floating about, that Miss Tabitha had hinted the wedding was to be put off, and that the Parson had promised her that he would not perform the ceremony. She, too, had marked the withdrawal of the Parson and the Colonel from the parlor; and, when Miss Tabitha made her exit also, she whispered to the Deacon to go and find Joab, and then followed her as speedily as was consistent with seemly appearances. She had arrived at the bedroom door in time to hear only the concluding words of Miss Tabitha's declaration, hereinbefore duly set forth, the which she, of course, supposed was spoken with especial reference to the wedding of Lucy and her son Joab.

The Colonel, fearing lest an unpleasant collision should take place between the two ladies, who stood glowering at each other, made haste to interpose and to explain.

"You needn't be agoin' off at half cock, as usooal, Axy," said he. "Nobody hain't said a word agin havin' Joab and Lucy reg'lary jined. The Parson here is agoin' to do that job jest as quick as this one's over that I've got in hand, which I am a-doin' of, in order to show and convince him that I ain't afeard, and he needn't be."

"What job?" cried Mrs. Sweeny.

"This young couple, as comes from out of the State, and wants to be married," replied her brother; "they hain't been published, to be sure, no more'n Joab and Lucy has, but I say that don't make no odds."

"Of course it don't," cried Mrs. Sweeny, who, under ordinary circumstances, would have denounced this doctrine as fiercely as Miss Tabitha herself. "They've jest as good a right to be married as ef they'd a ben published from the house-tops, and had a gin out notice by advertisin' for a year in Hudson and Goodwin's

Connecticut Courant; and, if anybody says they hain't, I'd jest like to hear the reasons."

These concluding words, inasmuch, especially, as the speaker had accompanied them with a scornful glance at herself, Miss Tabitha very justly construed as a challenge; and, in spite of the admonitory winks, frowns, and gestures of her father, she forthwith turned upon Mrs. Sweeny, and inquired if she herself would be willing to be married in that way, without a publishment, like the brutes of the field.

"As for me," replied Mrs. Sweeny, "I've ben married myself these five-and-twenty year, and my husband is still alive——."

"It's a wonder," muttered Miss Tabitha.

"And it ain't proper for me, Miss Tabby," continued Mrs. Sweeny, with increased bitterness, "to be a sayin' that I'd be willin' to be married this way or that way; but jest let me ask you, mum, and answer it accordin' to your conscience; wouldn't you jump at the chance o' marryin' any decent white man, ef you could git him, publishment or no publishment?"

At this home question, Miss Tabitha was almost beside herself with wrath and spite.

"I'd have you to know, ma'am," said she, in a hissing whisper, "that if I'd pleased, I could have been married to a dozen!"

"All to once, mum?" inquired Mrs. Sweeny, who had obtained the advantage in the battle.

"But I've always preferred, ma'am," continued Miss Tabitha, scorning to notice the interruption, "and I still prefer to live single, ma'am, and——"

Here Miss Tabitha, overhearing her antagonist mutter something about sour grapes, suffered her rage to wax so violent that words suddenly failed her.

While this acrimonious debate was going on, the strange young woman had been violently agitated; and if it had not been for the support of her lover's arm, which he put about her waist, she would have been scarcely able to stand. Mrs. Manners went up and whispered encouragement; and at last the Colonel, perceiving her emotion, determined to put a stop to its cause.

Mrs. Sweeny had just uttered a scornful laugh, by way of prelude to another attack in words, when the Colonel interposed.

"Now jest stop, Axy," said he, "jest shet pan, now I tell ye, and don't open your face again. I'm agoin' to jine this couple right away. They think it's proper to be jined, and I think it's proper to jine 'em, and ef anybody else don't like it they're free to clear out."

Hereupon Miss Tabitha sailed out of the room with great dignity, muttering as she went, at which Mrs. Sweeny could not, for the life of her, forbear coughing and hemming with great significance.

"And if nobody else ain't willin', after that, to jine Lucy and Joab," resumed the Colonel, "why I'll do it myself while my hand's in; for I've took a solemn oath on that pint, and I ain't agoin' to have it broken. Now then, my friends, ef you're ready agin', we'll go through this time without a halt. Jine hands —there—attention the whole—Do you, sir," he continued, "take this woman to be your wife, and do you promise to love, honor, cherish and maintain her as long as God gives you life, health and ability so to do?"

"I do, sir," responded the gruff voice of the bridegroom.

"And do you, young woman, take this man to be your husband; and do you promise to love, honor, cherish and obey him, till death do you part?" said the Colonel.

"I do," whispered the bride, in a voice that was scarcely audible.

"Then," continued the Colonel, with a little pomposity of manner and inflation of tone, "by the authority of the State of Connecticut, in me duly vested for that purpose, I pronounce you to be husband and wife; and what God has jined, let not man put asunder."

At the Colonel's request, Parson Graves then made another brief prayer, and as soon as it was concluded the Colonel went up and shook hands with the bridegroom, and kissed the bride; an example which was speedily imitated by his wife, who seemed to have taken a great interest in the newly-wedded pair.

"And now where's the stifakit!" said the Colonel. "I hain't got my specs," he added, as he sat down at the desk and took a pen to sign the document which Mrs. Manners had prepared; "but it's all right, I expect." His wife nodded, and the Colonel subscribed his

name with a flourish. "There," said he, rising and handing the paper to the bride, who took it with trembling fingers; "there mum, you're married now, jest as tight as ef a bishop had published the bans and performed the ceremony; and there's the evidence in black and white, which can't very well be got 'round or contradicted."

"Jest as tight," repeated Mrs. Sweeny with a triumphantly spiteful glance through the doorway at Miss Tabitha, who still remained in the dining-room.

"And now," continued the Colonel, "I insist on you taking off your things and going into the best room, where there's to be another weddin' right away, and arter that you must stay to supper, and all night, too, for that matter, if you will, and welcome."

"I'll see to that, husband," said Mrs. Manners, turning very pale; "and I wish that you'd wait a bit here, for I'd like to have a word with you before——"

At this gentle hint, Parson Graves, Mrs. Sweeny, the Deacon and Joab went out one after another, Mrs. Sweeny last of all, closing

the door behind her with a slam. Mrs. Manners stood in the middle of the floor for a moment, and then going quickly to her husband, she threw her arms about his neck, and began to sob as if her heart would break.

"Good natur!" exclaimed the Colonel, infinitely surprised at this unexpected demonstration. But before he had time to utter another word he was completely astounded by having the newly-wedded bride seize his hand, and drop upon her knees at his feet, crying and sobbing, all the while, as violently as his wife did.

"What on airth! why!" ejaculated the Colonel; "why! why! what on airth!"

"Remember your promise last night," sobbed his wife. "Don't speak harshly to me, husband; and yet, if you scold anybody, scold at me. It's all my doing and contriving."

"No, sir," said the tall bridegroom, taking a part in the colloquy; but speaking, not in the gruff tone in which he had hitherto spoken, "it's all my fault, if fault it be. I'm the one that's to blame."

"Why!" who be you?" exclaimed the

Colonel. "I seem to know your voice; but ——."

"It's me, sir—John Dashleigh!" said the bridegroom, pulling off his false whiskers and his wig, and then, after that, standing very straight and upright, and looking very pale, with a slight shade of a defiant expression, also, visible upon his features.

The Colonel's amazement made him well nigh speechless. "And—and—*you!*" he stammered, lifting the bride up from her knees, and turning back her hood until he saw the face that it concealed. "Lucy Manners! as I'm a livin' man!" he added, pushing her from him and sitting down in his chair.

"Forgive them, husband!" cried Mrs. Manners, clinging to his neck; "and forgive me, too, for I advised them to it."

"Forgive me, father! dear father!" sobbed Lucy, clasping his knees.

As for John Dashleigh he stood still, near the foot of the bed, with his arms folded across his breast, and growing pale and ruddy by turns.

Colonel Manners remained sitting in his

chair, with his lips compressed, and his features working. At last, when, after a stout and earnest struggle, he had conquered the first impulse of his angry surprise, he ventured to speak.

"I ain't a goin' to say anything hash or ugly to you, Betsey," said he, enunciating each word carefully, and with deliberation, "I never have done that yet, and I never will; but I tell ye, Betsey, I'm sorely disappinted and grieved. But I don't keer half so much about a plan's bein' broke up that I've laid out nigh twenty year ago, and 'lotted on, and hoped to see accomplished to-night, as I do to find the wife of my bosom, that I've allus trusted, a deceivin' on me and a plottin' agin me."

"Husband!" said Mrs. Manners, "hear me before you say such cruel words again! I may have deceived you, but I have told you no untruths. I may have deceived you, but I have meant it all for good; for your good as well as Lucy's. As for your disappointment, I am sure that Lucy never would have married Joab ——."

"I'd have died first," said Lucy, passionately.

"Your severity might have killed her," resumed her mother, "but it would have been better for her to die, than to live the wife of such a man as Joab Sweeny. If she could have loved him, I would have been willing to see her sacrificed to your cherished project. But she did not, she could not love him; she told you so: she declared to you that she never would marry him, and she has never since recanted."

"Yes," said the Colonel, "and, at the same time, I took a solemn oath which must be kep. I must keep my oaths, Betsey. They ain't like other words and can't be trifled with. Ef Miss Lucy is so sot in her ways that she couldn't back down from what she said, no can't I, nuther; 'specially as I've swore to't."

"But Lucy has fulfilled the condition of that oath to the very letter!" said Mrs. Manners eagerly. "I promised that she should do so, and I've fulfilled my engagement, too. Here is your oath, your very words, written

down at the time, and your name put to it with your own hand. See—hear—she has been married—on Thanksgiving night—to her cousin—not to Joab Sweeny, to be sure, but to John Dashleigh, who is no less her cousin, and who is the man whom she loves better than all the world, and who loves her as well. She was married in this house; and that it was in your presence, and with your consent, can't well be denied, when you yourself pronounced the words that made them lawful husband and wife."

"Le's see the paper," cried the Colonel, holding out one hand to take it, while, with the other, he vigorously rubbed his forehead. Then he got up out of his chair, put on his spectacles and went to the desk where the candle was burning, and deliberately read and re-read the oath that was written on the paper.

"Didn't I 'say your cousin Joab,' Betsey?" he asked at length.

"No, no," cried his wife, "I am sure you didn't. I took particular notice at the time."

"Purty well, purty well," said he, at last,

looking down over his glasses at poor little Lucy, who still remained on her knees, with her hands clasped, her hair falling down all over her shoulders, (for she had pulled off her hood and false curls,) and gazing up at her father's face with an eager, piteous expression of anxiety and hope. "I suppose, you little hussy, you think you've ben pretty smart to get round your old father in this cute way, don't you?"

"Oh! *don't* be angry any more!" cried Lucy, putting up her hands and shaking her head in the earnestness of her petition; "forgive me, oh! *do*, papa, and forgive John, and mother."

"Forgive John!" replied her father, "humph! I can't say as I blame John a mite."

"Thank you, thank you, uncle Starr!" cried John impetuously, and forthwith bursting out a-crying like the other two culprits. "Oh! uncle, uncle—I—I—couldn't help it—if there'd been the least hope of gaining your consent, even by waiting ten years, I'd have waited and toiled as Jacob did; but, you know ——."

"And I love John so much," cried Lucy; "and I hate Joab so awfully, I'd never have married him if he'd been the only man in the world, and I'd never seen John."

"Forgive, forgive, whispered Mrs. Manners, taking her husband's hand.

"Uncle," began John Dashleigh, "if you will forgive us, my whole life shall be one constant endeavor to make you amends for the disappointment which I have caused you to suffer to-night."

"And mine, too," said little Lucy, coaxingly. Mrs. Manners pressed her husband's hand and whispered softly; "and mine."

Ever since he had read the oath the Colonel's face had been gradually softening, until the benevolent good-humored expression which usually was visible there had nearly regained its accustomed supremacy. He returned the pressure of his wife's hand, and then addressed Lucy—"And do you love John, you little jade?" said he.

"Oh! yes, papa!" replied Lucy, who was still on her knees, catching hold of John's

sleeve, and trying to pull him down into the same position by her side; "I love him better than anything!"

"Better'n me, I expect, and your mother?"

"Y—yes," replied Lucy, a little fearful of confessing the truth, lest it might give offense; "but, then—so—so—*very* differently you know!"

"And you, John," continued the Colonel, "do you love Lucy as well as she says she does you?"

"I love her with all my heart, uncle," replied John with a quaver in his tone.

"Humph!" said the Colonel, "uncle, indeed! arter this, young man, you needn't call me uncle any more!"

"What then?" asked John, with a little trepidation; while Lucy and her mother waited anxiously for the reply.

"Why," said the Colonel; "I guess you'd better call me what your wife does, and be gettin' used to't."

At this speech Lucy laughed outright and clapped her hands: first, because she knew that if all was not yet forgiven there were

good signs that it would be, right speedily; and, secondly, because it sounded so drolly to her to be called a wife. Then she got up from her knees in a hurry, and threw her arms round her father's neck, and hugged him with all her might, kissing him at every breath; while the Colonel was rendered totally incapable of defending himself against this attack, by reason of the conduct of John Dashleigh and Mrs. Manners, who each held one of his hands.

At this juncture the bedroom door was suddenly thrown open, and the group which I have just described was thereby exposed to the astonished gaze of a crowd of people in the dining-room, foremost of whom stood forth Mrs. Sweeny and Joab. In the rear were gathered the Deacon, Parson Graves, Miss Tabitha, Susan, and the whole suite of groomsmen and bridesmaids, while beyond them all appeared the pale, anxious face of Mrs. Dashleigh, with little Ellen standing by her side.

When Lucy looked up from her father's shoulder she encountered the glance of mingled amazement, alarm and fiery indignation with

which her aunt Sweeny regarded the scene, which had been revealed by the bursting open of the door; and hastily releasing her father from the embrace in which he had been straightly confined, she caught hold of John, and then, being reassured by feeling her husband's arm stealing around her waist, her features assumed a wonderfully pretty expression of defiance.

"Law! see that!" exclaimed Miss Tabitha; "hugging in company—well—!"

"Ah—what—," began Mrs. Sweeny, and forthwith broke down.

"There ain't no use o' keepin' things back," said the Colonel, advancing a step to the doorway; "what's happened is very strange, and sudden, and unexpected, and the whys and the wherefores 'll have to be explained at some future time. What's done can't be helped, this time anyway, for it's of a natur that can't be undid, and there ain't no use a kickin' agin it, not a bit. You've got to hear it, Axy; and you too, Joab, and everybody's got to hear it and know it; and you may jest as well hear on't now as ever. You'll

bile, and I shan't blame ye, ef you don't bile over; but be as moderate as you can. The fact is, that unbeknown to me, at least in one sense, John Dashleigh here has jest up and married my darter Lucy, and she's up and married him, and what's more, I, unbeknown to myself, in a sartin sense, was the one that up and married 'em both!"

There was a general exclamation of surprise, which was by no means a whisper; but Mrs. Sweeny's scream of rage and disappointment was so very vociferous, that the crowd of guests in the parlor came thronging out in alarm, to ascertain the cause of the piercing outcry. The scene which was discovered by these new-comers was one which they never forgot, I warrant you. In the bedroom door-way stood the stout form of the master of the house, serving as a bulwark against the violent efforts that Mrs. Sweeny put forth to enter, for the purpose of administering corporeal chastisement upon the persons of the newly-married pair. Lucy, frightened out of half her wits at the extremity of her aunt's rage, and the awful threats which she constantly

uttered, clung to her husband's arm for protection; while John himself, proud and happy, but still a little apprehensive lest the virago should break through the Colonel's defense, stood ready to succeed him "i' the imminent deadly breach," in case of need. Mrs. Manners' usually rosy face, pale with excitement, appeared in the recesses of the bedroom. Joab, completly astounded and crest-fallen, stood beside his father; and, just behind the pair, the sharp visage of Miss Tabitha was visible, radiant with exultation at the disappointment of her late victorious antagonist, the Deacon's wife. The Parson had failed to comprehend the explanation which the Colonel had given, and, being prevented by the universal confusion from learning the truth concerning the matter, remained standing in the midst of the chattering bridesmaids and groomsmen, the image of perplexed amazement. In a corner of the dining-room Mrs. Dashleigh, with her arms around little Ellen, was weeping with joy; and in the open door-way to the kitchen was crowded a score of black faces, each

expressive of the most intense wonder and eager curiosity.

At length, Mrs. Sweeny, finding all her attempts to force a passage into the bedroom rendered utterly abortive by the Colonel's passive but effectual resistance, suddenly made a move towards the long table, and seizing hold of one end, she strove with all her might to overset it. But her excessive rage had made her impotent; and she succeeded only in displacing a few dishes, which fell to the floor and were broken, before she was restrained from committing further mischief by the interposition of a dozen hands. Then she gave another scream and fell away into a swoon, from which, however, she speedily recovered; for Miss Tabitha Graves happening to express her desire to be informed with respect to Mrs. Sweeny's present sentiments, concerning the propriety of celebrating a marriage ceremony without a publication of intention, this remark proved to be a most excellent restorative, more pungent and efficacious than either hartshorn, camphor, or burnt feathers; as was

made manifest by Mrs. Sweeny's coming to as soon as it was uttered, and replying at once to Miss Tabitha's inquiry, in a manner more earnest than polite. And when the Colonel at last ventured to remonstrate against a further continuance of her abusive language and behavior, she called to her husband, and with the Deacon and Joab set out for home, to the great relief of everybody, declaring, as she went, that she would never again set foot in the house while she breathed the breath of life.

When she had fairly gone, it seemed like a calm after a storm; and after a little whispering about among themselves, the other guests began to talk aloud about taking leave; the which when it came to the Colonel's ears he soon put a stop to. For, going to where the Parson and his daughter were standing, he spoke loud enough to be overheard by the attentive crowd—"Miss Tabitha," said he, "I must confess I'm purty much converted to your way o' thinkin', as, indeed, I most allus am, arter a spell of experience. This gettin' married by a justice of the peace, though

strictly accordin' to statoot, ain't, arter all, so satisfactory as when the jinin' 's done by a reglar ordained minister of the Gospel. Now this young couple that I put together to-night ain't ben published, to be sure, but I've gin 'em sich a start that there ain't no gettin' back; and I calkilate that, ef the Parson here 'll kind o' do it over arter me, what with what I've done, and what he'll do, the marriage 'll be about as valid as ef they'd ben reglarly published in the fust place. I've jined 'em kind o' rough cornered, but yer father 'll finish it, you see, as it were."

Miss Tabitha, being in a very exultant and self-complacent frame of mind, was easily disposed to be flattered by the Colonel's speaking to her in this fashion, and seeming in manner, if not in words, to ask her advice and counsel. "For my own part," said she, "I'm sure I'd rather go to Newgate than to be married to the best man in the world; and I would advise every other young maiden, who is not too far entangled, to be of the mind which has kept me single for so many—at least for a few years; during which I have had so many oppor-

tunities to change my condition. But, as you observed, Colonel Manners, your daughter, although I do not, to be sure, regard her as actually and truly married, still has, without doubt, gone too far with Mr. Dashleigh to be able to retrace her steps. I think, therefore, as you desire my opinion, that, under the circumstances, papa had better give the sanction of the usual and proper religious ceremony to their union. But poor things!" continued Miss Tabitha, sighing, and shaking her head, "though doubtless Mr. Dashleigh is a very worthy young man, at least I trust he is, still I cannot help pitying her from the very bottom of my heart!"

"Oh! yes! poor thing!" echoed Miss Tabitha's staff of old maids, who by this time had again surrounded their chief.

"Well, then, Parson, what do you say?" cried the Colonel, who, to tell the truth, seemed to feel quite jolly, notwithstanding his late disappointment—"will you consent to polish off my rough-hewing?"

"Of course he will, Colonel Manners," said Miss Tabitha, with a gracious smile; for the

Parson, who did not yet fully understand what had happened, was hesitating what to reply.

So, an hour afterwards, in the best room, (this time) John and Lucy, already husband and wife, stood up to be married over again; and, (though I say it that shouldn't) since Adam and Eve, a handsomer couple were never seen.

And now my story has reached its end. Authors are wont to consider their duty well performed, and their task well concluded, when they have contrived to bring their heroes and heroines, through many tribulations and dangers, to the altar of Hymen, and once joined the hands of the happy lovers in lawful wedlock. But I, conscious of the demerits of my tale, am fearful that one wedding will not be enough to save it from condemnation. So, in the hope of bribing my gentle reader to look with favor on my humble endeavor, I have thrown in another, and have exhibited for his delectation the rare spectacle of the hero and heroine of a story TWICE MARRIED to each other.

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J. G. Whittier's Opinion of Putnam's Monthly.

(From the National Era.)

PUTNAM'S MONTHLY.—Among the multitude of literary publications which fall under our notice—many of them of decided merit—we have no hesitation in assigning the first place to *Putnam's Monthly Magazine.* We have watched it with a good deal of interest from the outset, and while its singular literary ability has suffered no diminution, we have been gratified by noting a higher tone and aim in its leading articles—more breath and freedom, and a more courageous expression of opinion. It maintains the right of calm, manly discussion of all subjects of popular interest—the delicate question of slavery, and the indelicate one of Mormonism.

It coolly ignores the fashionable *taboo* of disputed points of metaphysics, theology; and politics. It is really refreshing to see, at last, an American periodical whose writers are not nervously apprehensive of what "Mrs. Grundy may say;" whose free, manly utterance betray no con-

sciousness of the presence of that ubiquitous old lady, who has tied pulpit and press to her apron-strings. Its political articles have the vigor and sprightliness of those of Blackwood, without the savage personalities and slang, which too often characterize the latter.

In its purely literary department, we question whether it has any equal on either side of the Atlantic. Tennyson, Carlisle, and De Quincy occasionally write for English magazines, but neither of them can be regarded as a regular contributor. Setting these aside, what names have Blackwood, or Tait's, or Dublin University Magazine, to offer, which will compare with those of Bryant, Longfellow, Curtis, Melville, Russell Lowell, and Bayard Taylor? Lowell's "Hymn to my Fire," and Longfellow's "Two Angels," will certainly not suffer in comparison with any modern English poetry. In light prose literature, we know of nothing, since the inimitable essays of Elia, which we should estimate above the graceful series of papers contributed by Curtis—"My Chateux," "The Sea from the Shore," and "Tidbottom's Spectacles."

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J. G. W.

Putnam's Monthly.—This vigorous and independent magazine appears to increase in energy and value with every new issue. There is a raciness and good sense in most of the articles which at once attracts the attention of the reader, and whether he agrees or differs with the sentiments they contain (for all sides are represented, and all the disputed questions of the day discussed), he must admit that they are written with force and originality, and

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In the present age, when truly, "of the making of books there is no end," the man who writes and the publisher who publishes a *good* book, may each of them be considered a public benefactor. And the same may be said of the publisher of a *good* magazine. Upon the last there is an especial and peculiar responsibility. From month to month he has to cater to the taste of a great variety of readers, ranging "from grave to gay, from lively to severe;" to furnish matter suited to these different tastes, to give to each their portion in due season, and at the same time avoid offending the most fastidious taste. He who succeeds in doing this, and gives to his readers the best productions of the American mind—articles of a high literary character, and of the best moral tone—may be considered a successful man. Mr. Putnam made the experiment of endeavoring to establish a magazine that could be pre-eminently American, and one that should be worthy to be sustained by the lovers of sterling and genuine home literature, and most nobly did he succeed in his experiment. Recently the magazine has come into the hands of Messrs. Dix & Edwards, 10 Park Place, New York, and so far it loses nothing by the change. Judging from the table of contents and a brief glance at the different articles in the June number, it is certainly equal to any magazine of the kind ever published in this country.—*Christian Enquirer.*

We have before us "Putnam's," for July. The present number commences the sixth volume. No periodical ever issued in this country has so soon acquired a permanent position in the literary world as this comparatively new competitor for public favor. It takes the lead of American magazines, and rivals Blackwood successfully in literary merit. Several of its articles and series of articles have made their authors famous, and given them a "local habitation and name" in author-land.—*Springfield Nonpareil.*

We have spoken thus at length of "Putnam's Monthly" because we think it is due to the enterprise that some acknowledgment should be made of our indebtedness to it, as a people. If it has not in every number come up to the promise which it has held out from the beginning, it is none the less true that no periodical ever before published in our country reflected so truly the thoughts of our Republic.—*State of Maine.*

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It has lost none of its ability by the change.—*Louisville Journal.*

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Household Words.—Our readers will remember that we have occasionally noticed this periodical in complimentary terms. It is, as most are aware, a weekly pamphlet, published in London, by Charles Dickens. It is republished in this country, both as a weekly and a monthly. The contents are made up of stories, many of them Dickens', and in his best style, essays on scientific subjects, with a view of making them familiar to all classes, political disquisitions, etc., etc., in all these breathe the spirit of the editor. His devotion to the interest of popular reform, his thorough despite of that rank which the accident of birth gives, in a word, his well-known love of pure Democracy characterizes every line. This periodical is published in a cheap form, so that it goes into the hands of the entire reading community of the British Empire, and is read with delight by that class which goes to make up the bone and sinew of a country.

We must confess we were taken a little by surprise at the remark of a very intelligent friend the other day. On being asked who he thought was the greatest man of the present day, he replied, "Charles Dickens." The more one reflects upon this man and everything connected with

him, however, the more satisfied he becomes that the answer might have been wider of the truth. If, to have gained a complete knowledge of human nature and of the springs of human action; if to have aimed to touch those springs so as to move thousands, to joy, grief, indignation, or which ever way he pleases; if to have devoted himself to the amelioration of misery, the undoing of wrong, the education of mankind, and to have brought his power and knowledge into successful action in these efforts is any mark of greatness, then Charles Dickens is indeed a great man.

Nor need even he regret the success of his efforts. Reforms in the Domestic laws, policy, customs, and habits of the people of England are this day enjoyed, which but for him, or some "such as he," would never have been thought of. Evils that have been borne for ages are now unheard of. Dickens does not so much write the songs of the people, by which they may be moved to impulsive action, as their thoughts and opinions, by which, with a sure and steady movement, they are led to accomplish lasting results. That, indeed, he is entitled to the distinction of being the greatest man of the age, we are not prepared to agree, but that he is entitled to precedence over many whom accident or intrigue has made famous, and that posterity will award him that precedence we do not doubt.

Meanwhile, if any person wants a periodical which unites more instruction and amusement than any other, let them subscribe for *Household Words.—Columbia Democrat.*

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Household Words.—The monthly edition of this work forms one of the best family magazines published in this country. It has a great deal of light reading which attracts the young, and gives one a very clear insight into

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WERE we out of our chair editorial, as a "private citizen" cut off from our exchange list and all that, one of the first magazines to which we should become a subscriber, would be Dickens' *Household Words.* This is a publication wholly out of the usual line, and beyond the common order of Magazine literature—with point and meaning, when it is gay or sportive, and eminently instructive when serious and reflecting. Much of this work is devoted to the discussion and illustration of just such subjects as will greatly benefit, while it deeply interests, the general seeker after knowledge, desirous of really useful information. Should anything we might say induce any one to try *Household Words* for a while, we believe they will thank us from their hearts as benefactors, so far at least. —*Woodville Republican.*

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HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—The number for August lies before us—for charming variety it is like a well-selected bouquet, pleasant to the eye, and graceful to the nostrils. But we have more than the agreeable—there is much that is highly instructive. Indeed, the tendency of this publication is to improve the human heart, and to call forth its purest sympathies. Very rarely does it contain anything that can give just cause of offense to the most sensitive mind. —*N. Y. Citizen.*

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